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WOODNOTES OF A WANDERER.

BY

JOHN RAMSAY.

KILMARNOCK, AYRSHIRE.

SEVENTH THOUSAND

By Druid's cairn, by martyr's stane,
By ruin gray, through churchyard lane,
By river famed, o'er battle-plain,
The wild, the dread,
The fair, entwined with deathless strain,
'Twas his to tread.

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TO

THE MEMORY

OF

ROBERT RAMSAY,

This Volume

IS

AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED

BY

HIS BEREAVED BROTHER,

THE AUTHOR.

859853

INDEX.

	Page
Life of the Author,	5
Eglinton Park Meeting,	13
The Sports of Fasten's-e'en in Kilmarnock,	37
Bewildered among Churches,	55
Address to Dundonald Castle,	70
Musings by the Clyde,	79
Martha of Myreton,	89
Alfred Græme,	94
The Loudon Campaign,	106
The Fortuneteller,	118
Meditations and Reflections,	124
Paterson's Attempt on the Temple of Fame,	130
Evening Thoughts on the Heights of Dundonald,	138
On the Death of My Sister, Mrs R. Parker,	142
Christ Weeping over Jerusalem,	146
Lament for Robert Tannahill,	149
A Visit from the Shade of Shakspere,	153
Epistle to Mr John Stirling, Darvel,	156
St Andrew's Message to the Scotsmen in Liverpool,	160
Epistle to Mr Charles Clark, Cottage-hill, Lanark,	163
Hughie Spiers ; or, the Wonder of the Nineteenth Century,	167
The Tombs of the Douglasses,	173

Page
On the death of Mr Hugh Adam, . . . 175
A Fragment, ... 178
Lines Written in Whalley Abbey, Lancashire, . 180
The Wandering Piper, ... 183
Epistle to Mrs Hamilton of Parkhill, . . 186
On Visiting Lanercost Priory, and Naworth Castle, . 190
On the Death of Mr George Osborne, . . 193
Epistle to Mr Robert Brown, Kirkhill, Craigie, . . 196
Hannah Hedgehog, ... 201
Lines to my Eldest Son, ... 204
Lines to Lavinia, ... 206
The Dog and the Cock—(not a Fable), . . . 208
On Seeing a Redbreast Shot, ... 210
Help's Elegy, ... 212
Arran from the Sea, ... 215
Fragment, ... 216
On Visiting the Grave of Hardie and Baird, . . 217
On being Overtaken by a Storm, . . . 218
On Meeting a Pythagorean on Bosworth Field, . 219
A Sketch, ... 221
Written at " the Bonny Bush aboon Traquair," . 223
Lines Written near Kilmarnock House, . . . 224
Written at the Grave of Robin Hood, . . 226
On being asked what Figure was most Descriptive of a Poet, 227
Midnight Thoughts, ... 228
A Fragment, ... 229
On Visiting the Lake of Windermere, . . . 231
Written in Melrose Abbey, ... 231
A Summer Evening, ... 232
Written at my Father's Grave, . . . 232
A Winter's Evening, ... 233
A Fragment, ... 234
Written in Dumfries Churchyard, . . . 234
Written under the Impression of Melancholy, . 235

Page
Written on a View of Cairntable, . . . 235
To Robert Rose, Esq. 236
The Sunflower and Pink, ... 237
To the Harebell, ... 339
The Flowers of the Forest, ... 241
A Wayside Gleaning, ... 243
On Visiting one of the Round Towers of Ireland, . 244
Written at the Grave of the author of "The Course of Time," 245
Written during illness, ... 245
Epitaph for C—rl-s L—ck—t, ... 246
Epitaph for Mr R——t C——d, ... 246
On some Ill-bred Agricultural Apprentices, . . 247
On Mr J. Inch complaining of the Small Size of my Volume, 247
Satan's Rejected, ... 248
On hearing that Mr Lamb had deceived Mr Shepherd, 248
On seeing the Effigy of a Bible above a Bookseller's door, 249
Singular Phenomenon on the Interment of an insidious Innkeeper, ... 249
Epitaph for J. W., Dyer, ... 250
Epitaph for Mr John Ingram, Artist, . . . 250
On a Carpet Factory Subscription Ball, . . . 251
To a Person with very Large Feet, ... 251
Epitaph for Mr T. Gunn, ... 252
To Irvine Water, ... 253
Tammy M'Quhae, ... 254
Jeanie o' the Fiel', ... 255
The Happy Five, ... 256
Sandy that wons in the Aird, ... 258
Sandy the Bookman, ... 259
Farewell to Craufurdland, ... 261
Stanzas addressed to the author on his visit to Edinburgh, 262
Sonnet to the author, ... 263
Opinions of the Press, ... 265

BRIEF SKETCH

OF THE

LIFE OF THE AUTHOR.

JOHN RAMSAY was born in Kilmarnock in the year 1802. His education, like that of most individuals in his sphere of life, was limited. After leaving the jurisdiction of the "dominie," he resided several years with an uncle, near the village of Dundonald. The ancient castle, and the romantic scenery in the neighbourhood, linked as they are with the stirring events of Scottish history, had no doubt an inspiring effect on the ardent mind of Ramsay. Hence it is that we often find him reverting, in his poems, to the enchanting spot, with all the buoyancy of youthful enthusiasm.

He was afterwards apprenticed, in his native place, as a carpet weaver; and, amidst the din and dissonance of the loom-shop, he occasionally essayed, in fancy's dream, to visit the poet's bower. A subscription paper for a ball was at one time handed through the carpet work, bearing these lines—

> "Every good fellow who wishes to prance,
> Come pray take the pencil and sign for a dance;"

and which, as a matter of course, was submitted to Ramsay, who wrote the following *impromptu* on the back of it :—

> "Old Plato once met Father Jove,
> And asked the Self-Existent,
> 'What was in earth or heaven above
> Of all most inconsistent?'
>
> "Jove heard the question, gave a nod,
> To Heaven's high towers advancing,
> Unveiled this world,—'Now,' says the god,
> 'D'ye see yon weavers dancing?'"

The satire, though it galled the more earnest promoters of the ball, was much appreciated; and Ramsay was induced to send the lines for insertion to the *Edinburgh Literary Journal*, a clever periodical, edited by Henry Glassford Bell, Esq. The lines, trifling as they may appear, were inserted in an early number. Emboldened by encouragement, Mr. Ramsay contributed

another poem to the *Journal*, entitled, "Lines to Eliza," which was also received, and highly recommended by the indulgent editor.

When the late Marquis of Hastings visited Loudon Castle in 1823, after his return from India, the Kilmarnock Volunteers and the Ayrshire Yeomanry repaired thither to congratulate him on his arrival. The excitement created in Kilmarnock by the turn out of the volunteers was considerable, and formed the engrossing subject of conversation for several weeks. Ramsay, whose *forte* certainly lies more in the satirical than the pathetic, selected "the march" of the volunteers as a legitimate subject for his pen, and wrote an amusing poem, in which he did ample justice to some of the more eccentric characters in the "dandy corps." The poem, though only in manuscript, was widely known throughout "Auld Killie," at that time ringing with

> ..... "the great campaign,
> Which the brave Dandies did sustain."

Mr Ramsay continued to work at the carpets for a number of years; but he is now, and has been for a length of time, in business as a grocer in Kilmarnock.* He is married, and has a rising family.

* Since this sketch was written, the author has sustained a severe reverse of fortune.

In 1836, after a sufficient number of subscribers had been obtained, he published the first edition of his poems, of which a thousand copies were printed. In 1839, he was induced to publish a second edition, with emendations and improvements; and now, we understand, a third edition of a thousand copies is in the press. The volume was favourably noticed in *Chambers's Journal*, and several local and other provincial newspapers.

"The Eglinton Park Meeting," the leading poem in the second edition, is among the latest of his writings; and, if we may judge from the strong poetical vein pervading it, his genius appears only to require cultivation to undertake a more daring flight. Written in the strain of Tenant's "Anster Fair," "The Eglinton Park Meeting" is a running commentary on everything that came within the author's observation, and is a poem of undoubted merit.

In the "Address to Dundonald Castle," he is no less felicitous in the selection of material than judicious in its arrangement. The ancient ruin, once the seat of Scottish royalty, is reverenced by the poet with an ardour, and described with a vigour, that touches and awakens the tender susceptibilities of the heart. We do not envy the man, who, after visiting the sylvan

shades and shaggy hills of Dundonald, does not recognise, in the glowing imagery of the poet, the reality and boldness of its representation.—From "*The Contemporaries of Burns, and the more recent Poets of Ayrshire.*" Published by Hugh Paton, Carver and Gilder to the Queen, and her Royal Highness the Duchess of Kent. Edinburgh. 1840

WOODNOTES OF A WANDERER.

POEMS.

EGLINTON PARK MEETING.

"If Pindar sung horse races, what should hinder
Himself from being as pliable as Pindar?"

BYRON.

I.

DAWN slowly vanished, and the source of light
Appeared in all his summer glory dressed,
And bade the seas and rivers sparkle bright,
And cheered afar the lonely mountain's breast,
Whose shaggy top was veiled in vapours white,
Where soared, sublime, the eagle o'er her nest,
By haunted cairn the simple lamb and ewe
Grazed 'mong red heath, wild-thyme, and harebell blue.

II.

And on a rock that aged seemed as earth,
Where time had toiled till with his toil turned grey,
The shepherd sat, and eyed, in all her mirth,
Nature rejoice along life's flowery way;
From blossomed thorn the mavis warbled forth,
The linnet from the broom and birchen spray,

The cushat mourned, and, as the bass to all,
Loud thundered o'er the cliff the mighty waterfall.

III.

Descending thence, along the misty plain,
On wings of thought th' enraptured eye surveyed
Rich lawns, extending even to the main,
And groves and vales in verdure's pomp arrayed;
And waving woods, now lost, and now again
The broad bright river, in his strength displayed,
Proud aristocracy's bedazzling bower,
The lone sad remnants of the feudal tower.

IV.

Far other features showed the city's face—
Buildings on buildings piled unto the sky,
The vagrant curs about the market-place,
The high slow-moving wain, the driver's cry,
The bawling sweep, the tippler on the chase,
Of stunted form, pale cheek, and heavy eye;
Toil's various tribes unto their tasks repair,
The drunkard to his den of frenzy and despair.

V.

O Heaven! what means this vortex we behold
Of human passions, human joys and woes,
Of vast extremes, and much that is untold
In life's retreats?—For ever onward flows
Time's tide, on which we rise but to be rolled
As wrecks, with all our transports and our throes,

Down to that deep impenetrable gloom
Which hangs o'er all that lies beyond the tomb.

VI.

But with that god we have begun our song,
Who swept of old the lyre, and strung the bow,
And dealt in pills (if Ovid be not wrong),*
And played the devil 'mong the dames below;
When he had farther sped the heavens along,
Our streets, lanes, highways made a glorious show,
With wains, carts, gigs, cars, studded with blythe faces,
Still answering to the query—"Are ye for the races?"

VII.

Behold how little lifts the sons of verse!
I fast got breakfast, faster was arrayed—
For Poets' garments, like their pounds, are scarce—
And seldom are on that account mislaid;
I cannot say that mine are the reverse,
And, worse than that, not altogether paid;
But soon I mounted by the turnpike post,
Watching, but not like Hamlet—for a ghost.

* "Mine is the invention of the charming lyre;
Sweet notes and heavenly numbers I inspire.
Sure is my bow, unerring is my dart,
But, ah! more deadly his who pierced my heart.
Med'cine is mine, what herbs and simples grow
In fields and forests, all their powers I know;
And am the great physician called below."

DRYDEN'S OVID.

VIII.

A car instanter trundled into sight,
Drawn by a donkey-looking creature vile,
Which in its youth had galloped with delight
On the high hills of some bleak misty isle.
A seat I found, and having sung—"All's right,"
Sober began to measure the first mile;—
Seat, did I say!—a hanging on the door,
For in the vehicle were already four.

IX.

One was a dominie,* a wag most queer,
As full of mirth as is of meat the egg;
Another was his daughter, and his dear
Partner in care a third, whom he called Meg;
The fourth, of whom you heavily shall hear,
In millstones dealt, and wore a wooden leg,
A namesake of the Macedonian chief,
The past world's greatest murderer and thief!

X.

Little occurred worth noting on the way;
Thronged with all kinds of creatures were the high-ways.
Of every colour in the light of day,
Crowds still came forth to join them from the bye-ways,
We took in Dreghorn village a short stay;
For having got, as some say, "kin' o' dry-ways;"

* Schoolmaster.

A place, like all else, where the greatest dunce,
May find the parson's residence at once.

XI.

For I must say, wherever I have been,
This task but little of perception craves;
O'er other mansions, soon the *manse* is seen,
Like some proud eastern prince above his slaves;
The pasture's rougher, and of deeper green,
A heavier crop upon the tillage waves;
The cow is plump and sleek, and more than that—
I'll point you out his Reverence's cat.

XII.

But, let us on: to Irvine soon we got,
Where swarms were casting fast, and others hiving,
And others sweeping past as hard and hot
As Monsieur Jehu had resumed the driving:
Waiters and ostlers drawing in the groat—
Like bladders blowing were their purses thriving;
Old Lethe's stream had swallowed up the ills
Of life, crossed loves, wives, and dishonoured bills.

XIII.

By Jupiter! it is a glorious thing
That there are times when we forget our cares,
Else to the grave they would our craniums bring,
Long, long ere garnished by the hoary hairs

The patriarch spake of;* but come, trim your wing,
My Muse, and mind more intimate affairs,
For now the scene of action we are near,
And best of company in front and rear.

XIV.

Through the deep ruts and fast fatiguing sand
Strained little "Charlie," though it was but slow,
And sunk his hoof where Neptune did command
The bounding waves a thousand years ago,
When unexpectedly he made a stand—
"Broke down," was chanted round, "broke down, hallo,"
And now our precious dominie alighting,
Leaped up into the air like cock a-fighting!

XV.

And stamped and swore with terrifying mien,
And cursed each thing that ever went on wheel,
Since the first day that chariot was seen
Which had the prophet footman to Jezreel;†
All horses, mules, and asses, that have been
Since Balaam's donkey made her grand appeal;
Each soul that ever drove a car a mile,
Since chariots started in the land of Nile.

XVI.

To every heathen deity for aid
He cried aloud; but, suddenly detecting

* Genesis xlii. 38. † 1 Kings xviii. 46.

His error, next to all the saints he prayed—
(When wroth we're nowise given to reflecting);
All fiends of whom e'er Milton mention made
He next invoked, and, foresaid things collecting
With oaths that never shall escape my tongue,
To them at once the whole concern he flung.

XVII.

But oft when rudest storms have ceased to blow,
Dame Nature will assume her sweetest face.
And after heights are hollows still, we know;
This with our dominie was just the case.
Perhaps such impious lengths he did not go;
For rhymers ever are a lying race;
But on *shanks-naigie*, or the "Independent,"
We gained the racing-ground—a scene resplendent!

XVIII.

Yet ere I dare it in descriptive flight,
My song, dear Nature, shall arise to thee;
What transports, dreams fantastically bright,
Thy charms have given me even in infancy!
Thy dewy wild flowers—dawn—and dying light
Of day, far o'er the wide illumined sea,
Thy mossy rocks, grey hills, and woodlands green,
Where my young soul first talked with things unseen.

XIX.

Behold the sandy plain here tells a tale
Of earth's mutations, to the thinking mind,

In words of thunder; westward the wide vale
Of mighty waters, rising to the wind,
And glittering in the sun, where the full sail
Of Industry or Pleasure still we find,
August Ben-Ghoil,* where evening billows meet,
And wash with songs the giant monarch's feet.

XX.

O, ho! my little sentimental blue,
You're at your woods, your hills, and streams again;
I'd thank you more to turn and take a view
Of titled Beauty, through the chariot pane.
The world's wide continents their tributes due
Have given to her shrine; and all in vain
We seek for similes to describe the fair,
For Nature's highest, brightest work is there.

XXI.

And many a youth of fair and manly die,
On charger of our isle's unrivalled breed,
Swift as the whirlwinds of the desert fly,
Pricks o'er the plain the snorting fiery steed!
What spendid equipages glitter by,
With sober, stately pace, or graceful speed!
Homer! all chariots in thy Trojan scenes
Were mere wheelbarrows unto our machines!

* Ben-Ghoil, the mountain of the winds, is generally known by its English and less poetical name of Goatfield.—*Scott's Lord of the Isles.* It is the highest mountain in the romantic Island of Arran.

XXII.

Now get your spectacles, my wayward dame!
Some self-styled critics say ye're short of sight—
Nay, altogether stupid, blind and lame;
(It may be)—but we'll canter o'er a height,
Whose very base would paralyse the same;
And from one page of Nature's book of light
Draw sweets their souls are strangers to:—let's hence!
What mastiff minds the messin's impudence?

XXIII.

Next see our *buirdly* farmers join the throng,
Upon their blacks, and browns, and lumb'ring greys;
Blythe as the larks the morning clouds among,
Hale as the breeze that fans their native braes:
And Clergy, aye, their gowns and faces long,
And other furniture of Sabbath days,
Are off; and lawyers, beagles* too—that's odd;
No! Satan sometimes ranks with sons of God.

XXIV.

Jack squeezes here his quid as in a vice,
And sea-born phrases deals, and oaths wholesale;
And there are men of garters, thimbles, dice,
While others nuts and gingerbread retail;
And some with organs, monkeys, and white mice,
While the *light fingers* follow Mammon's trail,
And prove by practice what the Scriptures say,
"That riches oft make wings and flee away."

* Bumbailiffs.

XXV.

Well, I do think, and almost, too, could swear,
They're here from every land beneath the sun,
And moon, and stars, and clouds—from each nook where
The wind has blown, grass sprung, or water run;
Where'er mankind have felt the thorns of care,
Or loved, or hated, or seen that old one
Called Death, although I miss the Ashantees,
And Cook's old cronies of the southern seas.

XXVI.

And fore and aft, and right and left they drive,
And ride, and walk, and run, condense and scatter,
Numerous as tenants of the busy hive,
Or the small gentlemen in drops of water
Seen by the microscope, a mass alive;
And joined with this, say, what a fund of matter
For sad reflection may we glean from yon
Neglected churchyard, all so sad and lone.

XXVII.

But to the tents away now we must hie—
The sun's far up, and soon the race will start—
And all things look more brilliant to the eye,
When folks have something got to keep the heart.
To paint this panorama grand when I
Attempt, as vain, as futile is my art,

As 'twould be catching Garnock* in a riddle,
Or playing on the tongs 'gainst Paganini's fiddle.

XXVIII.

With jostling, squeezing, driving, and what not,
We reached at length the vortex of commotion,
And took our seats among a merry lot,
Deeply engaged in Bacchanal devotion;
Pestiferous power! for all that has been wrote,
And said and seen, we drain thy deadly potion;
And oft yield part by part, till sinks the whole—
Unnerved the system, and unmanned the soul.

XXIX.

And, shade of Hogarth! what a scene was here!
Such eating, drinking, jesting, laughing, courting;
And by the aid of Fancy's fairy gear,
It seemed that meat and drink had ta'en to sporting,
Their riders thirst and hunger, their career
The gullet, and the goal, that all supporting
Organ, ycleped the stomach—ill supplied
In Ireland, and in England deified.

* Garnock, a small river in the district of Cunningham, Ayrshire, which rises from the foot of a very high hill in the moor called the Mistylaw, on the northern boundary of the county, parish of Largs, and runs shallow, clear, and beautiful, down the hill towards the south. It holds on its course through the parishes of Dalry and Kilwinning, enlarged as it flows by the addition of the Caaf and the Rye, till it falls into the sea at the harbour of Irvine.—*Chambers's Gazetteer of Scotland.*

XXX.

But my poor Pegasus is off the course;
No wonder, for he has a sorry rider:
Indeed, 'tis just such horseman and such horse—
The muse should run into a hole and hide her:
To every one we pass we are a source
Of shaking laughter—none e'er wander'd wider
From Phœbus' path, o'er ditch and quagmire skelpin',
The tailor unto Brentford, or John Gilpin.

XXXI.

Come, truce:—here, as Silenus drunk of old,
Sits Kate M'Killop, erst of Sannox Glen,*
Which modern avarice has turned a fold—
Once the dear homes of happy Highlandmen;
Moulder the rent green walls—the hearths are cold;
Where stood the cradle is the fox's den;
And many of her sons have found a grave
In that far world beyond the Atlantic wave.

XXXII.

But when the midnight moon has climbed the heaven,
And pale, cold, pure, shines each attendant star.

* A beautiful glen in the north of the Island of Arran, in the bosom of which a number of happy families had for centuries resided, till the year 1830, when they were expelled by the agent of the lord of the soil, and the grounds converted into sheep-walks—the greater part of the ancient tenants emigrated to North America. The name of M'Killop may still be traced on some of the rude stones that there mark the dust of men of other days.

To deep, deep vales a deeper tint is given,
And meeting tides their murmurs send afar—
The spirits of the forms of days, long driven
Away upon the wheels of Time's swift car,
Return, and o'er their joys and sorrows gone,
Moan on the wind around the grey grave-stone.

XXXIII.

However, let's go back and see our Kate,
Who, as the glass and hiccup will allow,
Holding, with both hands, firmly by the seat,
To neighbour spins this yarn, with beck and bow :—
"Our ane an' me was here last year, and great
"Was the galravagin and fun—hech-ho !—
"Here's luck !—but there was ae race, sic ne'er seen
"Was in Guid's yirth by ony body's een.*

XXXIV.

"I think there either was some aucht or nine
"O' ladies, wi' their ponies, this race rade,
"In tap-boots, breeks, sleeved waistcoats, bonnets fine
"Buskit wi' ribbons, feathers lang and braid.
"Here's luck, man, Donald, baith to thee and thine!
"I ne'er leugh mair sin' ever I was made,
"Nor I did at an eldren dame that wan it,
"She leukt sae awfu' queer frae 'neath her bonnet.

* A race was run, in 1836, with ladies' ponies, the gentlemen riders being dressed in ladies' leghorn bonnets. It was won for Miss Boswell of Auchinleck, by Mr Campbell, Sornbeg.

XXXV.

" Whether it was the ridin' brought the bluid
" Into her face, or no, I canna say ;
" But every smitch o't was a kin' o' red,
" Or rather somethin' comin near a blae ;
" And lang white whiskers on her face, some said—
" My een's no what they anee were in a day—
" Eigh, but here's tae her ! be her what she will,
" Of horsemanship she shewed nae trifling skill."

XXXVI.

With glass in hand, now o'er the form went Kate,
Right in a box of pies and gingerbread—
O'erturned a vintner, near about the weight
Of a prize ox ; like drowning people, glad
To seize on anything, he fastened straight
Upon a gauntree's end, completely clad
With casks, and down it came—the host grew pale,
For 'neath it stood a gross of bottled ale !

XXXVII.

The souls and bodies of the bottles were
Sent to destruction, save a precious few—
As Calvin tells us human beings are ;
Or like the " Highland Watch " at Waterloo :
Ten Women fainted—fifteen some aver ;
Perished of corset laces twenty-two :
Who doubts the truth of what is written here,
May find it all in the *Dumfries Courier*.

XXXVIII.

And is it thus?—O when will ye be wise!
My muse, whene'er ye find your favourite regions,
Ye fly like Vulcan hurled from upper skies,
Hume on the pensions, Boswell's* carrier pigeons;
Nay, pray, Miss, don't affect the least surprise—
The race starts, sure as men of all religions
Deem they are right, and 'tis a pretty omen—
You stand here trifling 'bout a drunken woman.

XXXIX.

But through the ever-tumbling human sea—
By Feeling's gales, by winds of Passion tossed—
We've steered with pilot caution to the lee,
And anchor dropt near harbour winning-post.
But, hark! lo, off they to the contest be,
Loud sound the hoofs upon the trembling coast,
And each as anxious is to be the winner,
As Satan watching o'er a dying sinner.

XL.

And watch he does, they say, most warily;—
Who say? the clergy;—and, 'tis therefore true;
Now, what a great old blackguard he must be!
But his attendance may be merely through
A touch of kindness;—o'er their daily fee,
Some farmers cart their weary reapers to
Their homes;—so, life's day ended, Nick a sail
May give his slaves—or ride upon his tail.

* Sir James Boswell, Baronet, of Auchinleck.

XLI.

Enough of this—behold like thought or light
They fly :—but these are similes too bold ;—
To have it like the wind, were something trite,
And by-the-bye, I think a little cold ;
To say they fly, or unto distant sight
Appear to fly, with critics e'en may hold ;
Though I ne'er yet have heard of flying steed
Save Pegasus, who was not known to breed.

XLII.

In ladies, lords, knights, gents of every grade,
Clergy, physicians, lawyers, and cutpurses,
Men of each business, calling, craft, and trade,
'Tis pleasant to behold how high the force is
Of the excitement, at this point displayed ;
Hung in suspense they're—though upon the course is
None quite exact, like Absalom on the oak,
When fled his treach'rous mule, which was no joke.

XLIII.

And as the rivals to the goal drew nigh,
Like dying storms in some rock-circled bay
Rises a clamour, or more like the cry
Of crowds when in the electioneering way ;
When men are valued just as they will lie,
The greater fib the louder the huzza !
While others shout, approve, condemn, though heard
Distinct, they've not one solitary word.

XLIV.

Ho! now they come—whatever head, or heart,
Or hand, or heel can do, is deftly done;
See, see, 'tis past—away the people start,
Scorning each barrier, crying "Boswell's won!"
'Twere surely now a very foolish part,
Should one course-guard attempt to stop the run;
Though we each day see things more foolish still—
As Owen's schemes—Sir Andrew Agnew's bill.

XLV.

And now, most patient reader, if you please,
We'll have a little soothing relaxation,
While things are at a kind of "stand at ease;"
But hark ye first this scrap of conversation:—
"Well, blow my eyes, since e'er I've cruised the seas,
"If yet I've looked on better navigation;
"And though the pilot came too late to port,
"'Twas but by point of prow, and d—d good sport."*

XLVI.

Now here, some antic specimens we'll see
Of various animals, both wild and tame,
Fit to bring Wombwell's grand menagerie,
Or even Captain Noah's, unto shame.

* Wednesday, April 26, 1837. Match, one hundred sovereigns, h.ft., Sir James Boswell's ch. g., Patriot, 4 years old, 11 st. 4 lb. (Mr Grant M'Dowall), beat Lord Eglinton's b. g. Pilot, aged, 12 st. 7 lb. One mile. (A splendid race, and won by the nose.)—*Ayr Advertiser.*

Some making loves, bets, bargains, ardently
  Playing their parts in life's vain subtle game;
Some slyly take their leave—as of his host
Did Boney, when o'ercome by General Frost.

XLVII.

And some, again, where justice keeps her shop,
  Contrive to hold a most confounded bustle;
Men of six feet through crevices do pop,
  That scarcely would admit my Lord John Russell.
Halloo! what's up now! backward, forward, stop—
  'Tis, as my grandmother would say, a tussle;
But who would not risk random treads and squeezes
To see men tested in a scale like cheeses?

XLVIII.

Others, before the tabernacle, or tent,
  Or what d'ye call't? where all grandees repair,
Stand, shewing each expression that e'er went
  To form ill-breeding's most accomplished stare.
Some do, as did the Whigs in Parliament,
  Which was just nothing—sure now most unfair;—
Nay, by the gods! say, what did either House?
The mountains laboured, and brought forth—a mouse!

XLIX.

Four things I know not, Solomon hath said;
  Four things there are which I sincerely pity;

But sympathy of bards to none brings aid,
More than the wind's sigh to a famished city:
They want the wherewithal, apt to parade
What brings but small relief, their whole—a ditty;
And like the cuckoo sing, their own affairs
Meantime the object of another's cares.

L.

First, then, a bigot, whose beloved creed
The world unprejudiced can plainly see
A bore, a bagatelle, nonsense; indeed,
What i' the nature of things can never be;
Life spent in doing nought; he who can plead
The cause of doctrines, whose absurdity
He knows full well;—young Beauty, else placed snugly,
If wed to husband crabbed, old, and ugly.

LI.

But what connection, you will doubtless say,
Have all the figures you've of late been tracing;
Cuckoos, and clergy, statesmen, beasts of prey—
Unto the subject you proposed—horse-racing?
I know my muse is oft, like one next day
That has been drunk, some fanci'd meteor chasing;
And that her brain as pregnant is with *havers*
As is with scepticism a Paisley weaver's.

LII.

For most my days in Killie* have been passed,
Where merit only dwells with monied men,

* Kilmarnock.

And these are scarce enough become at last,
A child might write them e'en without a pen;
But hear, Phrenology! and stand aghast;
If there the purse is well developed, then
They're clever, intellectual, "decent" gemmen,
Though fools, or fit to jig it a-la-Haman.

LIII.

"O! Killie, Killie," said some hapless bard,
(As most have been that ever touched the string,)
"Thou art my native spot, by fortune hard
"Compelled am I to distant wandering;
"Farewell! thy name I'll cease but to regard
"When ceases life unto my heart to bring
"Its flood; but ne'er shalt thou my ashes hide.
"Thou sink of scandal, poverty, and pride."

LIV.

But some will say it is a pretty town,
With which opinion I can half agree;
Still one thing brings it not a little down,
It seems to have been made for two or three,
Or six, or seven; or, lest dame Killie frown,
We'll say her *elect* may eleven be,
And some of these (heaven knows) make one inclined
To think that Fortune's mad as well as blind.

LV.

Hist! what in the name of wonder's coming here?
'Tis a dog-chariot, forsooth, and three!

And there's a maniac sweep, who seems to fear
Water nor wind, nor ought beside does he!
His head, neck, feet, all want the usual gear,
Yet wears the happiest visage I can see!
Nature such minds from care does kindly sever—
He shouts "Sir James and Eglinton for ever!"

LVI.

And lo! ranged ready at the starting-post,
Eight—the crack hunters of the day—appear;
Enough to summon to this world the ghost
Of mighty Nimrod; and he may be here
Around upon aërial billows tossed;—
You can't say no, I'm sure, my reader dear;
But to the race (let him who doubts disprove it),
'Twas won by Captain Houston's horse, Cognovit.*

LVII.

But scenes so similar why dallying sing?
'Tis my opinion that the muse supposes

* Wednesday, April 26, 1837. The Trial Stakes of 5 sovs., each. P.P., with 20 sovs. added by the Club, for Hunters. Half-a-mile five-year-olds, 11 st. 11 lb.; six ditto, 12 st. 3 lb.; aged, 12 st. 3 lb.

Captain Houston's Cognovit, aged,	(Owner 1
Mr Ramsay's b. g. Tamworth, by Canteen, 6 years,	2
Mr A. Campbell's Guess, by Champignon, aged,	3
Earl of Eglinton's Pilot, aged,	0
Sir James Boswell's Læona, by Juniper, 5 years,	0
Mr D. Davidson's Vingt-un, aged,	0
Sir D. Baird's ch. g. The Bird, aged,	0
Mr Kerr's The Kitten, aged,	0

—*Ayr Advertiser.*

All men are Jobs that listen to her string,
Or meek as Jewish legislator—Moses.
Of this and that, and every other thing,
She deals about such overpowering doses ;
But after this, which I'll be sworn you'll tire on,
Just read for regimen a page of Byron.

LVIII.

For I have penned much nonsense in my time—
Volumes in verse, and libraries in prose,
The first th' antipodes of all sublime,
Beneath where even your proper critic throws
His dart ; and now about "wrought out" in rhyme,
As miners say, a halt I should propose ;
For trash more trashy grows by repetition ;
See Lockhart's Poems in the third edition.*

LIX.

And now we met a friend of early days,
And sought the calmest corner of a tent ;
Reserve was packed on her penurious ways,
And canker care unto the misers sent ;
We basked a while in friendship's cheering rays,
And to our warmest feelings gave a vent ;
At last the hound, Time, broke us from the cover,
When, lo ! the races for a day were over.

* A work published in Ayrshire, some years ago, and which reached a third edition, through a process it were both tedious and unpleasant to recapitulate.

LX.

Troop after troop was disappearing fast,
Like morning's shadows from the misty lea;
The wave rose gently to the strengthening blast,
And the blue hills looked sullen on the sea;
The birds sang sweetly; in the glowing west
The sun, about into eternity
To roll the day, rode glorious—his smile
Lay lovely on the cliffs of Arran's rocky isle.

LXI.

Much yet remains might be detailed in song,
Ere to the dwellings got the honest folk;
For steeds stood at the doors of taverns long,
And gigs and cars were, and commandments, broke;
And some discussed a beverage so strong,
Surprised next morn they in the ditch awoke,
Enjoying Bacchus' blessings in the "blues,"
Those bailiffs craving outraged nature's dues.

LXII.

We cannot sing, forsooth, we have not seen
How merrily within the lofty hall
The feast was held, and youths of noble mien
And fairy figures mingled in the ball:
My muse is in the dumps and jaded clean;
Moreover, won't of dancing sing at all—
And for this piece of indolence does plead
She's steadfast Antiburgher in her creed.

LXIII.

But all must have an end—this day has had,
The races, we must, and so must this rhyme;
The world, sin too—of this I'm very glad,
And think it is a doctrine most sublime,
And wish it soon (of late I'm grown so bad),
Betwixt sin and repentance all my time
Is spent. But, reader, I must close this strain,
Some other day, perhaps, we'll meet again.

THE SPORTS OF FASTEN'S-E'EN IN KILMARNOCK.

I.

The day was sleety, cauld, and doure,
Dame Nature's face was wan;
The noteless birds, wi' dowie cower,
Happed round the bields o' man.
Yet young folks, wi' their new duds on,
And bawbees gathered lang,
Stood at the doors, while to the fun
The crowds were skelpin' thrang
And thick that day.

II.

'Twas Killie's far-famed Fasten's-E'en,
The fireside was my station,
Till ca'd a stanch auld-farrant frien',
Yclcped Dan Observation.
"Come, Jack," said he, "we'll up the gate;"
Sae, trudgin' cheek-for-chow,
A' een and ears, awa' we set,
The motions o' the row
To note that day.

III.

We gained the Laigh Kirk's sacred fauld,
Whare sheep on Sunday gather;
And mony a solemn truth here tauld,
And mony an unco blether.
By this the fun was just begun—
The multitude was roarin';
And up and down, and roun' and roun',
The water-warks were pourin'
Their store that day.

IV.

The Cross we wan, weel studded through
Wi' mony a gazing gaper;
Men o' a' ranks, and women, too,
Aye trump at every caper.
And mony a face was there, I wot,
That showed the farce was pleasin',
But that, in Fortune's mill, they'd got
A most tremendous squeezin'
For mony a day.

V.

"Now," said my friend, "mark ye yon fish,
"A' bloatit, bleart, and blinkin',
"And belly turned, like some tun dish,
"Wi' eatin' and wi' drinkin';
"He's laughin' at the grand stramash,
"And thinks he's safe frae harm."

Wi' that he got a noble lash,
Which douked his convex thairm
Right weel that day.

VI.

Jock Stewart took a pipe's comman',
Though for his neck 'twas risky,
And dealt it roun' wi' heavy han'—
Ye're sure it wasna whisky.
For, had it been, he would, I ween,
Ta'en rather better care o't;
Nor, by his drouth, to ony mouth
Hae had ae drap to spare o't—
On that same day.

VII.

Out-owre the heighest house's tap
He sent the torrent scrievin';
The curious crowd aye nearer crap
To see sic feats achievin'.
But scarcely had they thickened weel,
And got in trim for smilin',
When roun' the pipe gaed like an eel,
And made a pretty skailin'
'Mong them that day.

VIII.

Now here, now there, he took his mark—
Now down, now up, he liftit;
And droukit some unto the sark
That hadna ane to shift it.

And aye the callans were as keen
To stan' and get a blatter,
As they had Roman Cath'lics been,
And it a' holy water
That fell that day.

IX.

Next strutted by a stranger Miss,
In Fashion's finest glare,
Come into town to taste the bliss,
And show and sell her ware.
But what can a' this din excite—
This universal keckle?
We turned about, and Jock, for spite,
Had spoiled her fishing tackle
Complete that day.*

X.

'Twere not an easy task to tell
How many got a bathin';
And what to shins and taes befell,
To dogs and dandies' claithin'.
How many drones enjoyed the sight—
How safe and snugly seated;

* In our early days it was customary on Fasten's-E'en to use the fire-engines, or "water-warks," as described in the text; but, alas! with cock-fighting, once prevalent on that day, and other incontrovertible proofs of the wisdom of our ancestors, it has joined "the things that were."

Or wi' what trifles, vain and light,
Mankind will be elated.
On ony day.

XI.

But surely Killie's sons are blest,
That hae sic fine diversions;
And rulers, using for the best,
Unparalleled exertions.
Sic shinin' spires, and streets sae grand,
Observatories bonny;
And burial-grounds,* that in the land
Are not surpassed by ony—
I'll swear that day!

XII.

Now closed this scene—and now the crowd
Dispersed in a' directions;
While water-warks proclaimed aloud
The pavement's imperfections.
And some gaed aff to slake their thirst,
And get their cargo shippit;
We took the hint, amang the first,
And into Joppa's slippit,
To taste that day.

* At the time this was written, in proportion to its inhabitants, perhaps no town in the United Kingdom had so limited a place of interment as Kilmarnock; and things of a very revolting nature were often witnessed.

XIII.

There ca'd we roun' the cap wi' tent,
Till, to the window veerin',
We saw a sight that might have sent
The very stanes a-sneerin'.
Of duddy boys, five hundred guid,
And in the front presidin',
Twa warlike chiels, in blue and red,
As big as farmers, ridin'
To fair some day.

XIV.

The ane, a halbert shouthered high,
And purse, breeks, shoon, an' bonnet,
Fit laurels for the victory,
Hung splendidly upon it.
The ither beat the row-dow-dow,
A wee, but wickit sinner;
And great temptations they, I vow,
Held out to ilka rinner
To stake that day.

XV.

The clock near three had turned about;
We down the street gaed cockin',
To see our Councilmen march out,
(Wi' reverence be it spoken;)
We stood at Bailie Fulton's door;
And I maun gie confession,

Their ranks, and music placed before,
A glorious procession
Did mak' that day.

XVI.

"Now," cried a pigmy 'mang the crowd,
"In vain my neck I've rackit,
"For faces, thought that see I would,
"Wi' wit and wisdom packit:
"They're fish, nae doubt, wi' finer scales,
"And redder 'bout the ginnels:
"That's a' the difference frae oursels,
"Pale Misery's fated panels,
"And hacks this day."

XVII.

'Twould tak' a Lockhart, or Will Pum,*
Or some sic son of thunder,
To paint lang Harvey at his drum,
And every ither wonder:
The bark of dogs, the bawl of boys,
The sneer of many a scorner,
That mingling rose, in one wild noise,
As round by Mathie's corner
They gaed that day.

XVIII.

Now folk sped thranger to the race
Than e'er to kirk on Sunday;

* Two bards who have had the honour of founding a nondescript school of poetry.

And like a priest's was ilka face,
On Sacramental Monday,
When wi' his brethren hame he hies,
And sees, a' spread before him,
An' glittering in his fancy's eyes,
The banquet for the quorum,
Prepared that day.

XIX.

We joined the noisy fickle flock,
And heard in quick succession:
"My heels!" "I say, ye jade, whare's Jock?"
And mony a queer expression;
We scarce gat peepin' roun' about,
So sairly were we battered,
Till on the course, amaist worn out,
And a' wi' dirt bespattered,
We stood that day.

XX.

Then opened full on ear and view
The congregated "rabble"—
The varied face—the dress—the hue—
The mingled gibble-gabble—
The *blackman* wives*—the gingebread creels—
The maids for sale in braces—

* Sellers of confections made of boiled treacle.

And droves o' swankie kintra chiels,
Wi' roun' red, rosy faces,
Sae blythe that day.

XXI.

Here youngsters throwing turf and clay,
Are scourin' roun' sae tricky;
"Almanacs for the present day,"
Are bawled by Johnny Mickie.*
There's Muirland, wi' his plaid and dog,
And Will M'Web, the weaver,
Right thin and blue about the lug,
Puir sapless, stunted shaver,
Here met this day.

XXII.

And yonder is a whisky-stan',
Whare, drinkin' roun' and crackin',
Are seen a squad; and there a ban'
Thrang down the fences breakin';
Anither core are jumpin' keen,
And strainin' nerve and muscle;
While some light-fingered lads are seen
Performin' in the bussle,
Fu' gleg this day.

* A dealer in gingerbread who was wont to perambulate the race-course on Fasten's-e'en, calling out, "Almanacs for the present day; an' if ye canna read them, ye may eat them."

XXIII.

Here mony a chiel, wi' gaudy coat,
Flegs by wi' unco bluster,
That, o' his ain, a guid gray groat
I'm sure could hardly muster.
See yon twa up their noses set,
Deep read in roguish dealings,
As they, for every pound o' debt,
Could pay their twenty shillings,
Clink down this day.

XXIV.

Great flights o' foreigners are come,
Frae Fenwick's far dominions;
Men o' Beansburn—frae Stew'rton some,
That dwell 'neath Lainshaw's pinions;
And frae beyon' whare Irvine roars,
The Riccartonians mighty;
An' tinkler bodies frae Kilmaurs,
That great and wondrous city,
Are here this day.

XXV.

Newmilns' dog-fechters hae come down,
Some squintin' through their glasses;
Wi' folks frae Darvel's lang-tailed town;
Tarbolton's lads and lasses;
Wild natives o' the Hurlford;
And Galston wabsters lazy;

And frae the Crookedholm, a horde
O' woollen-spinners, greasy—
Quite big this day.

XXVI.

An', canterin' like a cork i' the tide,
Ho! here comes Hughie Vane,
At kirk-plate either he'll preside,
Or head Rab Owen's train;
'Deed ony part in life he'll play
To gain the puff or penny;
A precious proof how little may
Suffice to gull the many
He is this day.

XXVII.

An' beagle Jamie wi' the *great;*
Ay, mud will for a time
Wi' water mix, but soon or late
Maun fin' its native slime;
It needs nae witch or ghost to tell,
Wha herds wi' sic a fellow,
Is either little worth himsel',
Or pitifully shallow,
I'm sure this day.

XXVIII.

An' mony mae the scene hae sought,
Owre taiglesome to mention,

A' keen pursuin' *Mr Nought*,
Wi' most profound attention;
Frae brawny chiels aboon sax feet,
That sturdily can stab it;
To infants, at their mammy's teat,
Scarce far ayont a rabbit
For size this day.

XXIX.

Here some are crackin' loud o' Dun,
And some o' ane ca'd Rover,
And some o' Neil, that aft has won,
But now is fairly over;
Ithers of Brigton, Boyd, and King,
Discuss the several merits;
And ither "bloods" that, in the ring,
Hae shown their strength an' spirits,
On some sic day.

XXX.

And this we heard o' female talk—
"Yon's Maggy Featherbrainie,
"That aft, last year, in Rumpie's Walk,*
"Was heard and seen by many,

* A shaded avenue in the vicinity of Kilmarnock House, now destroyed. In the summer months it was much frequented by persons of both sexes, and of all ages, and is associated in our own mind with some of the brightest images of life's morning dream.

" And now she's tied to yon wee chap,
" Yon poukit-leukin' monkey;
" And got a young ane in her lap,
" And face as lang's a donkey—
" I'm sure this day!"

XXXI.

" Hech! lass, d'ye see Tam Catchthepence,
" The great big witless clown,
" Yet thinks he's gotten a' the sense
" That's in Kilmarnock town?
" Ou-aye, and fain a saunt would be;
" My word, if dirty greed
" And slander mak' a saunt, that he
" Is ane, ye dinna need
" To doubt this day."

XXXII.

Quo' blear-e'ed Meg tae fish-wife Jean,
" Is tat a beast or bodie?
Was ever sic a creature seen,
" Sae tousy an' sae duddy?
" He'll be the king o' craw-deils a',
" Or may be, lass, wha kens,
" Some tailor's midden run awa',
" By help o' steam-machines,
" T' the race this day."

XXXIII.

"Weel, ye're ae bletherin' gouk," quo' Jean;
"Ha! middens an' craw-deils;
"Ye leuk as ye had pawned your e'en
"For whisky in Tam Neill's!*
"That's Tammie Raeburn o' the ark,†
"Far prouder o' his rags
"An' tautit hair, than ony spark
"That by sae saucy wags
"New clad this day!"

XXXIV.

But suddenly the scene is changed!
And, O! what preparation
To clear the course, and get arranged
The crowd in proper station.
"Stan' back! stan' back!" is bawl'd about—
Sic ruggin' and sic rivin'—
The big folks threaten, thump, an shout,
As they were at the drivin'
O' nowt this day.

* A noted "*howf*" of those necromancers who transform coats, shirts, shoes, &c., into what is falsely styled "cheap whisky."

† A person lately deceased in the neighbourhood of Kilmarnock, who, in consequence of losing a lawsuit, lived unshaven and unshorn for nearly thirty years, nor changed his clothes during that period, with the exception of his linen.

XXXV.

At length they're in a kind o' square ;
And a' the finer cattle
The inner court claim as their share,
Nor mix wi' baser metal.
But if this spot by worth is got,
Some chiels hae ta'en their places,
That in the rear, I rather fear,
Maun show their gawsy faces
And fronts this day.

XXXVI.

Now aff his duds ilk rinner flings,
And hands them to some crony ;
While expectation draws her strings,
And maks her motions mony :
She fixes some like Lot's auld wife,
Maks ithers fidgin' keen,
Sets some hearts wi' their holes at strife,
Some baith wi' mouth and e'en
Gars glower this day.

XXXVII.

Awa' like *grews* behint poor puss,
They cleave the yieldin' ether ;
Or clergy to some patron's house,
When dies a weel-paid brither,
An' aye the drum cries something mair,
As won the tither course is ;

And, O! what deep important stare
Hae a' the stick-armed forces,
On guard this day.

XXXVIII.

Now Byron here himsel' would fail,
And Shakspere's muse would sink,
To justice do to this same tale,
And tell it o'er in clink:
What shouts came pourin' frae the ring,
How ilka birkie strained,
How at the hindmost bout, lang King
Cam' in wi' strength weel hained,
Like shot that day.

XXXIX.

And loud as winds and waters met
In Winter's mad convention,
A moon-struck congregation set
On schemes of sea-extension.
The crowd brak for the winnin' post,
(O! grand important spat,)
And ran as life had been the cost;
Nor did they ken for what
It was that day.

XL.

O, sirs! weel Robin Burns might say,
"Mankind's an unco squad;"

A wee thing lifts them up the brae,
A wee thing makes them sad.
The man they idolise this day,
The next they'll pelt wi' mud,
And stain his name wi' calumny,
And e'en would shed his blood,
Some ither day.

XLI.

The second race might be our sang,
But 'twere a subject tame,
Just as the Psalms of David gang,
"Another of the same."
An' when 'twas owre, how through the yets
And slaps baith young and auld,
Like to sae mony gimmer-pets
Frae some new-opened fauld,
Did break that day.

XLII.

An' how some crackit, lang and keen,
'Bout rinners and the race;
How wooers set the tryst at e'en,
And named the time and place;
How grannies led their oyes in han',
Wi' muckle dauds o' snap;
And wee anes, daubit wi' *blackman*,
Auld-farrant out the lap
Did keek that day.

XLIII.

And we might paint auld Killie town,
Would Phœbus gi'e's a heeze;
When ilka change-house made a soun',
Just like a byke o' bees;
But 'twould be folly great for folk
Withouten legs to rin;
Or bats an' owls at twal o'clock
To try t' outstare the sun,
On simmer day.

XLIV.

But some will sing, and even preach,
Lang after they hae dune,
And lest the same dry road we reach,
We'll quat, or change the tune.
May Killie's sons and bonny dames
Be strangers lang to hardships,
And better luck attend their aims,
Than ever did my bardship's
By night or day.

BEWILDERED AMONG CHURCHES, AND CONVERSATION WITH A "CHARACTER."

In passing through life's busy street,
What various minds we chance to meet!

I.

One afternoon, as carelessly I strolled
Through Stirling, ancient, and romantic town,
Pondering on days when Fortha's waters rolled
Above the rock's now castellated crown,
And merry mermaids would their gambols hold
Whence cannons look so sulkily adown,
And pretty little whales took mammy's drop,
Smacking their lips, upon Demyat's* top.

* Dummait hill is situated on the northern bank of the Forth, nearly opposite Stirling. From its conical summit may be seen part of twelve counties, comprehending a view as romantic and beautiful, as various and extensive. Macneill, in his charming poem, the "Links o' Forth," exclaims—

Or fragrant whar, at openin' day,
The whins bloom sweet on Aichill brae,
There, whan inspired by lofty lay,
He'd tak' his flight,

II.

Ah! those were times, the good old times said I,
Which all our efforts never can remand,
I felt at once as if about to cry,
(An onion garden was perhaps at hand,)
When bump my precious beaver went awry,
For lo! a church had ordered me to "stand,"
But not "deliver," though, we know that they,
The churches namely, do so every day.

III.

Of course, obliged to take another route,
I got along some twenty yards or so,
And studious still, again when looking out,
Egad! I found no farther I could go
In that direction, almost led to doubt
My senses, looked a second time, and lo!
Another church; I muttered, there has been
A shower of these things hereabouts, I ween.

And towerin' climb, wi' spirits gay,
Demyit's height.

Dunmait, or Dun-ma-chit, is said to signify the hill of the good prospect. But from *Din*, Brit., *Dun*, Gael., a height, a hill; *mai*. Brit., *magh*, (*gh* mute,) Gael., that is extended, an open field, a plain, a level country; and *Ith*, Brit., *Ith*, or *Ad*, Gael., what is nutriment, grain, corn in its natural state; Dun-mai-th, Dun-ma-ad, may denominate the height of the corny vale, the hill of the fertile champaign.—*Kennedy's Glenochil:* Edinburgh, Constable & Co., 1810.—(Vol. i., p. 202.)

IV.

Then West away with pace of postman sped,
And strange to tell, had scarce been blessed with time
To bid my vagrant thoughts with measured tread
Return their faces to the land of rhyme,
When entering a gate whose pathway led
Through flowers, (those handmaids of the "blue" sublime,)
A sexton-looking soul, with bow polite,
Said, "Sir, there is no sermon here to-night."

V.

Another church again! I cried aloud,
And wheeled as sudden as a ghost I'd seen,
And, sallying to the street, beheld a crowd
Of boys run off, as frantic they had been—
Like star half shaded by a snowy cloud,
Looked many a fair behind her window screen—
Age cried "He's clean gaen gyte," while down the street
Dogs ran as whirled on "locomotive" feet.

VI.

Perhaps the worthy people chanced to know
Some little of the state of my finances,
Which were, as usual, standing very low
(A case the same as being out your senses)—
One thing, the multitude will have it so;
And that being poor we break all virtue's fences,
Is an opinion just about as common
As self in man, or vanity in woman;

VII.

Strut in a soldier, in a churchman pride,
Pets with old maids, or money with a miser,
As shipping on the Mersey's muddy tide,
Or puffs in Gray's *North British Advertiser;*
Sectarians with a haughty moral stride,
That tells you they're the holier and wiser,
Which is a fact that stands on stable feet,
However, —— only in their own conceit.

VIII.

But Master *Or*, may go a packing now
To see how cabinet counsellors get on,
Hinting the nation wears a boding brow,
And asks for bread, nor will receive a stone;
Resolved the fiend *monoply* shall bow,
Yea, tumble headlong from his high-built throne.
But ho! cries father Tempus do proceed,
Remember, John, this is the age of speed.

IX.

Well, said I to myself, it will not do,
I'm very bad indeed at making faces,
But must look somewhat soberer to view,
Or sure I am to get into such places
As office of police, or jail, or who
Can tell, by this, that simple as the case is,
'Tis not where most unlikely to grow less—
To wit, with some keen caterer for the press.

X.

" And scarce of matter would he be, I ween,"
Reflection whispered with sarcastic sneer,
" In any journal would as soon be seen"
Some beetle's death, or butterfly's career;
However, with a rather starched up mien,
A few yards northward I contrived to steer,
And there quite confidently stood in view!
Without one blush, a church d'ye think, aye—two!

XI.

Now passed with hurried step a stately gent,
Of whom I asked the way to Stirling bridge—
" Just follow me," he said, and off he went
With rat, tat, tat, along the pavement's ridge.
I'd do so better had old Nature lent
Me more, I said, of Mercury, or the midge,
At which he seemed to take an inclination
To do as trains when getting near the station.

XII.

Or rake, when cash and constitution fail,
Canting of " sad depravity" and " sin;"
Or bard whose fancy's wing must slower sail,
As bright materials are getting thin;
Or old extortioner, when waxing frail,
And having got his money snugly in,
Makes large bequests, believing he engages
God's special favour with the devil's wages.

XIII.

Next of my new made friend I took a glance;
And one he was I shall not soon forget—
Tall, strongly built, yet straight as is a lance,
With noble countenance, curled locks of jet;
His step was Freedom's; but to save the dance
Of words, there Hercules and Apollo met;
He raised his hat, exposing such a head
As might bring Gall and Spurzheim from the dead.

XIV.

Perchance you'll say he was of noble birth,
With a long lineage, and a lofty name;
If so, you're wrong; his sires had tilled the earth—
At least were farmers—and he was the same,
And nothing owed to framed or fabled worth
Of Heraldry's preposterous acclaim—
That heap of chaffy corn, which, winnowed, will
But turn up things were better to lie still.

XV.

Since shadow will for substance scarcely pass
So well just now as in a former day,
Mankind are looking through a different glass;
The gods of gingerbread must pass away—
Like Babylon's merchants, cry alas! alas! *
And band in vain to quench Truth's potent ray.
We'll soon not be those gulled, rank-ridden things,
Earth's crafty few can keep in leading-strings.

* Revelation xviii. 16.

XVI.

Down to the fertile valleys of the Forth
We came, indulging in such tittle tattle
As "crops" and "weather," which, in south and north,
Is skirmishing in conversation's battle,
Yet often leads to things of greater worth—
A "trotting out," as Yorkshire says, of cattle,
And bears to serious talk the same relation
As paper unto gold, to love flirtation.

XVII.

I see your land is very good, said I,
And fitly farmed, as Stirling's annals tell,
And with its vast agrarian supply,
Appears to bring forth churches very well.
"Yes," said my fellow traveller, if high
"Our morals stand not, this protest I shall,
"'Tis not for want of churches, or more near it
"To come, for monuments of party spirit.

XVIII.

"I wonder where the mania will end—
"To strangers, sometimes, 'tis a problem hard;
"A Yankee asked me once, 'did we intend
"'To turn old Scotland into one churchyard?'
"'Or lest the guardian angels of the land,
"'Should ever take a thought to walk the ward,
"'We meant for them a church-roof road to keep,
"'From the Tweed's margin to the northern deep?'"

XIX.

But people still some hobby-horse will ride,
I answered, and in looking o'er their many,
I'm sure you will most readily decide,
A church is as respectable as any;
Although it sometimes opes its mouth as wide
As fit to make a Scotsman sing out, "canny;"
And this I know, some useful institutions
Have suffered much by those "free" contributions.

XX.

"Free!" cried the stalwart yeoman, and behind
He flung his plaid with such an air and force,
Had English cotton-spinner faced its wind,
His task was finished, as a thing of course;
"Free!" he continued, "to my cost I find
"They have been free, or rather something worse;
"Indeed, one portion seem not to have known,
"In their hot zeal, their neighbour's from their own."

XXI.

"I lost three hundred pounds the other day—
"A bankrupt business—by a party who
"Had in religious matters much to say—
"To all the points of orthodoxy true;
"Stood often foremost in the grand array
"Of church subscriptions, dined the reverends, too;
"But such, I find (a melancholy fact 'tis),
"Do often least of Christian precepts practise."

XXII.

" To judge of people's hearts I will not dare ;
" Besides unfit, 'tis no concern of mine ;
" Maybe Devotion has her dwelling there ;
" But of the gas or soda-water line,
" And then, 'tis seldom that the masters care
" To put the pressure on, or wire t' untwine ;
" But in their lives, 'tis pitifully plain,
" We almost always look for it in vain.

XXIII.

" I'm sure there never was an age wherein
" Men made about religion so much sound ;
" Nor one, despite of all the deaf'ning din,
" In which true godliness did less abound.
" Each strives to gain his point through thick and thin ;
" Truth's ties are owned in theory, but found
" Oft, in their inclinations, like the bands
" Of the green withes on mighty Samson's hands."

XXIV.

" The gospel came good-will and peace to spread ;
" But should we judge of it from what appears,
" Especially of late, we'd think it had
" Been sent to set us fighting by the ears.
" One pulls this way, another that, as glad
" When some pretext for controversy rears
" Its front ; and with malignity and pride
" Inflated, each cries God is on his side.

XXV.

" Some that their cause is that of Deity
" Will with a calm effrontery maintain;
" As if the Godhead should a leader be
" In our base feuds, and bigotry insane;
" In short, be altogether such as we,
" Or even something of a deeper stain;
" But many causes will such titles claim,
" For which wise Heaven must have a different name."

XXVI.

Well, sir, said I, I really must confess,
Of men and manners I but little know,
Of bickerings for creeds still something less—
The last I have relinquished long ago.
Those duties which the Scriptures on us press,
(Though the frail flesh will sometimes whisper—no),
I strive to practise, and let those who will
Of bootless, wordy warfare take their fill.

XXVII.

Yet one may see this even with half-shut eye,
If you with priest and people would stand well,
Profess, support the church, and raise the cry,
That heretics go headlong unto hell;
Ne'er mind that irksome dame Morality,
She may with Truth among the water dwell,
Or turn teetotaler, or get protection
From Unitarians, or the Quaker section.

XXVIII.

To his own sect, "ye're God's peculiar few,"
Still sings some well-paid gentleman in black,
Who, if that sect their bibles rightly knew,
Might to the *hod* have bent his sturdy back.
I hope the dawn will yet break brightly through
These mists, and bid nine-tenths of them to pack;
Though, in all lands, man was, and is a pigeon
Fond to be plucked in matters of religion.

XXIX.

"'Tis there your right," returned my stately friend,
"Let but the clergy once cry 'tallyho,'
"And off they scour, though what will be the end
"Requires no gift of prophesy to show.
"A churchman's movements mostly one way tend,
"Or Pope, or Chalmers, Candlish, and Co.,
"Established, or sectarian, much the same
"Power, and its lever, money, are their aim.

XXX.

"In darker times, behold a moon-struck monk*
"Aroused all Europe's chivalry to arms;
"Kings left their state, nor even beauty shrunk
"From war's fatigues, its dangers and alarms.
"The church had said—it was enough—and drunk
"With dire Fanaticism's cup, in swarms,
"Year after year they gave their bones to shine
"A ghastly necklace for Dame Palestine.

* Peter the Hermit, agitator of the first Crusade, A. D. 1097.

XXXI.

" And now, for all the turmoil and affray
" Raised by the reverend founders of the ' Free,'
" And debt contracted for th' unborn to pay,
" And discord wrought in many a family,
" And the vast sums which from all quarters they
" Have wrung—aye, even the gains of slavery !
" They'll yet be found beneath the royal wing
" Crying ' contentment,' and ' God save the King."

XXXII.

The Abbey Craig * now bade us take good night—
Not that I would be understood to mean
That staid old gentleman had left his site,
To step such two vile reprobates between.
I turned, and as upon th' adjacent height
The gallant agriculturist was seen,
A contrast wide, thought I, 'twixt this and many
A pale appendage of the spinning-jenny.

XXXIII.

That hapless class, degenerating still
From sire to son, and wherefore, that a few
May live like princes, and what time that bill
Presented is, which none could e'er " renew ;"

* A well-known rocky height on the northern bank of the Forth, about two miles distant from Stirling. Here the Scottish army were stationed, commanded by Sir William Wallace, previous to the decisive battle of Stirling Bridge, A. D. 1297.

The world may stare to be informed their will
Is of that kind most gratifying to
The hopeful heir's expectant, watering gums,
That dear commodity, a dish of "*plumbs.*"

XXXIV.

But, oh! ye "Cotton Lords," who've fought so well
In Free Trade's cause, it surely cannot be,
You wear those very vices which you tell
So loud against the aristocracy;
Yet, should you take the field again to quell
Oppressors, do it more consistently,
And let me humbly beg you not to roam
In search of subjects quite so far from home.

XXXV.

No doubt things glide on very smoothly now,
At least for those who gather in the gold;
Nature may seem beneath their power to bow,
Her vengeance sleeps but—and it comes as bold
As torrent from the mountain's shaggy brow,
Or surf that for a thousand leagues has rolled,
Of physical and moral destitution—
Still sad and certain is the retribution.

XXXVI.

'Twas now that hour so silent, and so sweet,
When light's last streak is lingering on the hill,
As if it wooed some passing seraph's feet,
And the soul drinks from Nature's fount her fill;

And with the pure and beautiful replete,
Soars o'er each sordid aim, and selfish will,
And rises upon thought's celestial wings
From scenes of transient to eternal things.

XXXVII.

Then (whate'er sceptic sophistry may say),
A something tells with eloquence divine,
When all this glorious structure we survey
Is changed, or blotted from the grand design,
Our better part shall triumph o'er decay,
And with eternity itself entwine—
Thus, like a mountain we, whose base is given
To earth, and yet the summit high in heaven.

XXXVIII.

Before me seemed to pass a godlike train—
Wallace, and Bruce, and all the patriot band,
Who nobly burst the Southron despot's chain;
Inestimable blessings to our land
Bequeathing; and the Bard whose lofty strain
Has made us high among the nations stand—
The manly Burns (what spells attend that name),
His country's pride, and everlasting shame.

XXXIX.

Reader (should such a prodigy be found),
When through these lines you work your weary way,
Let patience on the right hand much abound,
And on the left a store of mercy lay,

And yet, I dread in wrath you'll fling around
Their mangled limbs, and stamping, swear that they
Within themselves contain the seeds of death,
Like that grim *spec*, baptized the "*Ayrshire Wreath.*"*

* An Annual published in Kilmarnock in 1843, and for the two succeeding years: it was projected chiefly from pecuniary motives, and conducted in a manner worthy of its origin. We contributed gratis to the first edition, and also induced some of our friends to lend their assistance, yet paid a higher price for a copy of the *Wreath* than the stipulated subscription. Besides, had the vexation to find the following line inserted in our verses, charging the revelry, we had denounced, upon a class of the community who had no participation in it—

"What, alas! to the *toil-worn* no honour has been."

NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE,
January 1846.

ADDRESS TO DUNDONALD CASTLE.*

——— "There is given
Unto the things of earth, which time hath bent
A spirit's feeling."—BYRON.

O, ANCIENT pile! fast hastening to decay,
Around thy ruins, musing as I stray,
How many mingling feelings do I find,
With pleasing sadness burst upon my mind.
Long hast thou stood beneath the stroke of time,
And all the rigours of a northern clime;
And changes witnessed, generations seen
Swept from the earth, as if they ne'er had been;

* Dundonald Castle is a ruin of great celebrity, and occupies a commanding situation in the district of Kyle in Ayrshire. It was originally the property of Robert Steuart, who, in right of his mother, Marjory Bruce, succeeded to the Scottish throne, under the title of Robert II.; and who here wooed and married his first wife, the beauteous Elizabeth Mure of Rowallan. Dr Johnson, on being conducted to the place by Boswell, is said to have made the ruin ring with laughter at the idea of a Scottish monarch being contented with the narrow accommodations of a slender tower of three stories, each storey containing only one apartment.—*Chambers's Gazetteer of Scotland.*

Beneath the deep forgetfulness and shade
Of the lone kingdom of oblivion laid.

Oft thou hast seen the morning sun arise,
And spread his glories o'er the eastern skies—
Shine round the world rejoicing as he drave,
Then sink sublime beyond the western wave;
And oft his fading beams have cheered thy halls,
And lingered sweetly on thy dark grey walls.

Spring thou hast often seen, with gaudy train
Of opening buds and blossoms glad the plain:
Along these hills the robes of summer shine,
As oft, like all beneath the sun, decline;
Their toils, their pleasures, witnessed numbers know,
That now, with all that moved the world, lie low.

Autumn—rich autumn—thou hast seen unfold
Her treasures vast of fading green and gold—
Her bended branches, fields of waving corn—
Her sultry noon, chill eve, and dewy morn—
Her wains returning with their precious boon,
Beneath the glories of her ripening moon;
How oft, perchance, some loveforn swain has heard,
Or wandering song-wrapt melancholy bard,
As spirit sung with viewless harp his tale
At midnight still, by woodland in the vale.

Fast by the verge of yon sequestered wood,
Where mourns the cushat for her captured brood,

Methinks an ancient reaper-band appears,
Their graves now furrowed with a hundred years;
Back to the world I see their forms return,
Souls that now perfect in the empyrean burn;
They stoop, they strain, with careful hands they raise
The scanty crop of long-forgotten days.
Behind them stalks the venerable sire,
Controls or counsels as their needs require;
And, as the labour burns, his heart beats high,
Joy beams triumphant in his aged eye;
A well worn bonnet on his hoary head,
Long silver locks upon his shoulder spread;
Bent with the blast of days, yet firm withal,
Like you grey oak that scorns the tempest's call;
Health, innocence, and peace around him play,
And gild the hours of life's declining day.

Now on the hills descend the shades of night,
The twinkling stars shed down a feeble light;
Homeward they go, and mark the inviting flame,
The happy hearth, and household joys proclaim;
As perched the redbreast 'mong the yellow leaves,
Sings to the wind, slow whispering through the sheaves;
Where are they now? some spirit seems to say;
Lost to the world, and mouldering in the clay.
In yonder spot, alike unknown they lie,
Till the last morn shall dawn along the sky.

Oft hast thou stood in night of awful storm,
And seen the tempest nature's face deform;

The red swollen rivers with the ocean rage,
And deep with deep tremendous warfare wage;
And like to Faith, from sad Affliction born,
Forth from the darkness come the smiling morn.

While from thy ruined heights my eyes survey
Heaven's mighty arch and ocean's boundless way,
By Fancy's aid I see the lightning fly,
And hear the thunder roll along the sky;
O'er the blue void behold impetuous sweep,
On whirlwinds throned, the spirits of the deep;
Wild, foaming, fierce, the crested billows rise,
Like snow-capt mountains mingling with the skies;
Now roll afar with loud re-echoing roar,
Now awful burst upon the trembling shore,
Pour gloomy clouds along the affrighted plains
From their wide wombs the desolating rains.
Hark! o'er the dread abyss the sea bird screams,
The rocks resound, again the lightning gleams!
Again, harsh thunder rends its swaddling cloud,
The forests crash, the rivers shriek aloud;
Down the black hills, before the torrents' force,
Roll shattered rocks, still gathering in their course;
Groan, as beneath this whelming host is hurled,
The adamantine pillars of the world.

Lo! far along the deep, the sport of tides
And warring winds, a lonely vessel rides;
Now on the billow's mighty convex tossed,
Now in the whelming surge completely lost;

The crew's frail remnant on the rigging spread,
Long for a shore their feet shall never tread.
Weak grows the bark, and shattered with her toil,
As on she labours through the vast turmoil;
Hope sighs farewell! they shriek—down, down she goes,
The tumbling billows o'er their victim close.

Turn, my wrapt thoughts, nor dwell upon the scene,
Too far in fancy's fairy land we've been;
See! calm the ocean spreads itself along,
With mellowing murmur to the zephyr's song;
Night's purple sky o'erhangs the mighty flood,
Far weltering wide, in trembling waves of blood.

How drear the prospect; yea, how wild the view,
When from thy heights his glance the warder threw,
Ere Science bade her sun, with radiance free,
Dawn on our distant island of the sea;
Tall towering forests sullen gloomed around;
And flung their shadows o'er the vast profound;
A semblance keen the sylvan country bore
To the dark wilds that skirt Columbia's shore.*

But cultivated now—till fades the eye,
Unnumbered beauties ranged in order lie;
The town that shades in smoke its giant form,
The stately spire that wrestles with the storm;

* The ancient Caledonian forest is supposed to have covered a part of Ayrshire.

The splendid villa, and the lofty dome—
Wealth's safe retreat, and pleasure's softest home;
The verdant lawns, where greenwoods intervene;
The twinkling rill, the lonely cot serene;
All—all combined, beam full upon the sight,
One heavenly picture of refulgent light.

The cloistered monk, the shrewd designing priest,
With all the trumpery of the Popish beast
Thou hast beheld, when Superstition hoar
Triumphant spread her wings from shore to shore;
When banished Truth at times an effort made,
To peep affrighted through the dismal shade.
But like the sun emerging from a cloud,
Dawned Reformation on the darkling crowd,
Bade Learning rise, and Liberty expand
Her cheering rays, and glad the weary land.
Now Art, now Science on Britannia smile,
And hand in hand dance round the stormy isle;
No more to sordid mummery is given
The adoration due alone—to heaven;
No more the host, to tyrants ever dear,
Shall curb bright genius in her fierce career.
Away! away, blind leaders of the blind:
Curse to the earth, and ruin of mankind!

Stern Persecution, with his naked brand,
Hast also witnessed, traversing the land;
His blood-red standard streaming in the van,
With bearings hostile to the rights of man;

And all the woes Oppression's victims bear,
In ghastly order rampant in the rear.

Methinks thou answerest with an hollow groan,
Yea, and would wept, could tears have come from stone,
To see old Scotia's sons, for conscience sake,
Doomed to the rack, the gibbet, and the stake;
Or plunged in noisome cells, or sold to die
In servile bonds beneath a burning sky.
The peaceful cottage in the moorland vale,
The scene of deeds that modesty must veil;
Then to the flames its humble rafters given—
The tender wife and helpless offspring driven
On the wide world, the father forced to hide
In some lone cavern on the mountain's side;
Or in the labyrinths of some gloomy dell,
There with his God and solitude to dwell;
Where the dark stream that slid the vale along,
Murmured responsive to the martyr's song,
That rose at midnight oft, when all was still,
And swept in heavenly strains the lonely hill;
Looked down the wondering moon—the stars on high,
In conscious silence, wheeled along the sky;
The spirits, gliding through the midnight air,
Heard, for his foes, the wanderer's fervent prayer.

O! may the monster ne'er again invade
Our isle, nor here his triumphs be displayed,
But sleep secure, as ages roll away,
With things long buried from the glance of day.

And, O! my soul, for present peace adore
The Power Supreme; and that great Power implore,
That all oppressed and wronged of human kind
May soon their rights and privileges find—
From where the Line's deep burning billows roll,
E'en to the dark dominions of the Pole.

When feudal bands engaged, and fields were lost,
Thou prov'dst a shelter to the vanquished host;
Oft have thy walls the fierce assault withstood,
And thy green hill been dyed with hostile blood.
But bending now beneath a load of years,
Frail and departing all thy strength appears;
Loud through thy riven walls the tempests howl,
The dark recesses of the lonely owl
And sable rook, which tenant the abode
That courtiers, dames, and warriors have trode.

Strange it may seem, yet Scottish records tell
Even regal splendour deigned in thee to dwell;
How sadly changed!—in thy deserted halls
Rank grow the weeds; and round thy ruined walls
The ivy creeps; thine ancient glory's fled;
Thine ancient tenants numbered with the dead.
Yea, with the stream of time a wave rolls on,
Whose surge shall leave thee not a standing stone;
The sun shall rise, the waning moon decline,
The night look down, the star of morning shine,
And mark thy towers that long have braved the rust
Of time departed, level with the dust.

Long ere that day shall this frail form be prest
In the dread arms of everlasting rest,
A thing unnamed beneath the reckless tread,
Long, long forgotten 'mong the silent dead.
These eyes, that gaze on ocean, sun, and shore,
Shall burn with rapture at the sight no more;
And this sad heart, so oft the seat of woe,
Shall feel no more the agonizing throe.

Thus things terrestrial wing their rapid flight,
Clouds of the morn, or vapours of the night;
The sons of men like shadows flee away;
The everlasting hills themselves decay;
You towering cliff—lone pillar of the sky,
Shall o'er the plain in mouldering ruins lie;
Proud cities perish, and their sites be lost,
And e'en old Ocean seek another coast;
Britannia's Isle shall sleep beneath the wave,
And o'er her pride the fierce Atlantic rave;
The moon herself forget through heaven to ride,
And draw from shore to shore the heaving tide;
Yea, vanish shall earth's great revolving ball,
For change and vanity is stamped on all!

MUSINGS BY THE CLYDE.

I.

The morn appears—the lovely morn of June—
All warmly smiling on sweet Nature's face,
Like mother o'er her child that craves the boon,
In cradled beauty, of a warm embrace;
Each moment carries on its wings some grace
The beauteous blushing goddess to array;
And every melody resumes its place.
In the grand choir, to swell the lofty lay,
And Echo waits to wing the anthem on its way.

II.

Adorned with diadem of dawning's cloud,
Hail! Tinto,* stately monarch of the scene;

* Tinto, a lofty mountain at the head of Clydesdale, lying on the boundaries of the parishes of Carmichael, Weston, and Symington. The word *Tinto* signifies "The Hill of Fire," and derives this appellation from its summit having, in an early age, been a place whereon the Druids lighted their fires in heathen worship. From its isolated character and great height, Tinto may be seen from almost every part of Clydesdale, and even Dumbartonshire. Its

Ten thousand years hast thou beheld unbowed,
Clyde roll his waves the rugged banks between,
Yet look'st as everlasting—as serene
As when the pillars of thy strength were laid.
Child of the earthquake! frequent hast thou seen
Those deeds of darkness, Druid rites displayed,
When Nature stood aghast, and Truth retired dismayed.

III.

And feudal times their fantasies unfold,
Their bands of discord hurl the car of blood,
Whose brightest deeds were ever best untold,
Whose wisdom was but Folly's wildest mood.
Avaunt! Oh, Chivalry, thy greatest good
Was but the shade of very vanity!
And went thine evils forth long unsubdued
By lapse of ages; without shore, a sea—
A wide unfathomed vast, like an eternity.

IV.

To whate'er point the pensive eye is cast,
Lo! now thy halls are Desolation's prey;
Sublime memorials of the darkening past;
And their proud tenants, where, alas! are they?

highest part rises like a great dome above the other eternal edifices of nature. In clear days, the Bass may be seen on one side of the island, and the Firth of Solway on the other. There is a cairn of stones upon the summit, the top of which is elevated 2351½ feet above the level of the sea.—*Chambers.*

The wild rose, on the fresh and dewy spray,
Smiles through the path where deadly shaft has sped;
And where the trumpet summoned war's array,
The redbreast on the stunted hazel's head,
Awakes his stealing strains, that seem to mourn the dead.

V.

Where scattered lie beneath the tangled brake,
On brink of Cartlane's* terrible abyss,
The wrecks of Castle Qua;†—now let me take
One lofty look of this wide wilderness—

* Cartlane Crags, a deep chasm, supposed to have been formed by an earthquake, through which the Mouss Water (remarkable a little farther up for Roman antiquities on its banks) seeks its way to the Clyde, instead of following a more natural channel, which everybody seems to think it should have followed, a little farther to the east. A bridge of three arches was thrown, in 1825, across the narrow profound, its two piers being at least a hundred feet high, while the whole length is little more. The building has an exceedingly striking effect. At a little distance below may be seen one of those narrow old bridges, with an arch precisely semicircular, supposed to be of Roman structure. In the western face of the chasm of the Crags, a few yards above the new bridge, a small slit in the rock is pointed out by tradition as having been the hiding-place of Wallace, after he had slain Heselrig. It is still termed Wallace's Cave.—*Chambers.*

† Castle Qua lies on the east side of Cartlane Crags. It is supposed to derive its name from the Gaelic word *Cuach*, a drinking cup (the *Quech* of the Lowlands), to which shape the chasm of the Mouss, when seen from the Castle, has a striking resemblance.

This amphitheatre, whose green walls kiss
The dazzling summer skies; and, O! survey
How far beneath is stretched its loneliness,
The Mouss, though sweeping with unwonted sway,
Is heard, like song of storm, on hill-top far away.

VI.

And down the dizzy gulph's tremendous bay,
The giant rocks, in majesty severe,
Frown through the waving foliage, and betray
The hawk's high citadel; but cause of fear
None hath he, for the steps of man have ne'er
In yonder spot left their polluted trace;
The little warrior lists, with upturned ear,
His dappled pinions trims with native grace,
Then cleaves the deep blue air, afar in fields of space.

VII.

Again descend the slippery winding path,
But with no tame emotions mark the spot;—
Here Freedom, with her chosen Wallace, hath
Retired, when weeping Scotia's homes had nought
But fetters for the slave; and here were brought
News of the blight of his affections' bud,*
Which in his soul a fiery tempest wrought,

* A female attendant is said to have conveyed the melancholy intelligence to Wallace, who had retreated to Cartlane Crags. There, in the midst of his followers, he heard the heart-rending recital of his bereavements with a behaviour worthy of himself, and becoming the occasion.—*Life of Sir William Wallace, Knight of*

That drank his tears, as does the lava's flood
The dew, and burned and blazed till quenched in
Southron blood.

VIII.

O! justly-famed, transcendant, peerless chief!—
Age has on age long sunk beneath the tide
Of deep oblivion, yet thy laurel's leaf
Is seen to flourish in its pristine pride;
Conquering Death's power, and Time's imperious
stride;
The Genius of thy country oft her eye
Lifts, to gain strength when omens dark preside,
To where thou, with her Burns, art seated high—
Twins on the hallowed mount of immortality.

IX.

Far in yon vale, where lofty towers of Lee*
O'erlook the wide arms of the mighty oak,

Ellerslie, and Guardian of Scotland. Published by Richard Griffin & Co., Glasgow, 1825.

* LEE.—The environs of Lee, an elegant modern, castellated edifice (Lockhart, Baronet), contain a remarkable natural curiosity, in the shape of a large oak tree, whose trunk is thirty feet in circumference, and which having become rotten through age can hold in its hollow inside nine persons standing upright. It is called, reason unknown, the Pease Tree, and is supposed to be a relic of the ancient Caledonian Forest. Under its venerable shade charters connected with the family are said to have been written, and it has been entailed by written deeds for fourteen generations.

Which, by the voice of sage antiquity,
A thousand years has braved the tempest's stroke:
There, when her beauteous neck unto the yoke
Of Superstition, Caledonia bowed,
From distant parts would weary pilgrims flock,
To bear the water hence, with charm endowed,
Art, nature, fate to foil—at least so deemed the crowd.*

* The Lee Penny.—This curious heir-loom, of talismanic celebrity, was acquired by an ancestor of the present possessor of the estate of Lee, Sir ——— Lockhart. When Sir Simon Locard accompanied the good Sir James Douglas to Palestine, bearing the heart of Bruce in a locked case, on this account his name was changed to Lockhart, and he obtained for his armorial bearings a heart attached to a lock, with the motto, "*Corde serrata pando.*" Engaged in the wars of the Holy Sepulchre, this hero had the good fortune to make a Saracen of rank his prisoner. The lady of the warrior came to pay his ransom, and was counting out the money, when she happened to drop from her purse a small jewel, which she immediately hastened to pick up with an air of careful solicitude. Lockhart eagerly inquired the nature of the jewel, and learning that it was a medicatory talisman, refused to deliver up his captive, unless it was added to the sum previously stipulated. The lady was obliged to comply, and Simon brought it home to Scotland, where it has ever since continued in the possession of his descendants, perhaps the only existing memorial of the Crusades in this country. It is called The Lee Penny, on account of its being set in the centre of an old English coin. Triangular, or heart-shaped, it measures about the third of an inch each way, and is of a dark red colour, but perfectly transparent. The nature of the stone cannot be determined by lapidaries, being apparently different in all respects from any known in this quarter of the world. To the edge of the coin a small silver chain has been attached; and the whole is deposited in a gold box, which the Empress Maria Theresa presented to the father of the late Count

X.

In vain, 'twas said, might stern disease assail,
Where'er the potent water found its way;
Nor spell of weird infernal might prevail,
Nor e'en the water-dreading madness slay;
Such were the dreams of man's untutor'd day,
And wizard, witch, wraith, ghost, and goblin drear,
The spunkie, brownie, kelpie, and the fay—
A motley troop—have all held revel here,
All danced on Cartlane Craigs; beheld and heard with fear.

Lockhart. The Lee Penny did not lose its talismanic property on being transferred to a country of Christians. On the contrary, it has been all along, even to the present day, remarkable for medical virtue, especially in the diseases of horned cattle. The mode of administering it is this:—Holding it by the chain, it is three times plunged into a quantity of water, and once drawn round,—*three dips and a sweil*,—as the country people express it,—and the cattle and others drink of this water, for the purpose of being cured. In the reign of Charles I., the people of Newcastle being afflicted with the plague, sent and obtained the loan of the Lee Penny, leaving the sum of £6000 sterling in its place, as a pledge; and so highly impressed were they with an opinion of its sovereign virtues, that they proposed to keep it, and forfeit the money; but the Laird of Lee would not consent, for any consideration, to part with so venerable and gifted an heir-loom. About the beginning of last century, it is said to have cured Lady Baird of Saughtonhall, who having been bit by a mad dog, exhibited all the symptoms of hydrophobia. In his fine chivalric tale of "The Talisman," Sir Walter Scott has made an admirable use of this curious relic of antiquity. Strangers from all quarters still resort to Lee to view this celebrated gem; and the present worthy proprietor has adopted the idea of keeping an album, in which the names of visitors are recorded.—*Chambers.*

It comes, it comes, the glorious march of mind!
Children of darkness, whither have ye fled?
Ride ye sublime on chariots of the wind,
Whom kindred haste to join with noiseless tread?
Or in the land of shadows rest the head?
If so, Heaven grant your slumbers be profound,
May silence keep her watch around the bed
Whereon ye rest—in sacred circle bound—
Oblivion's curtains closed eternally around.

XII.

Assume not, Bigotry, thy withering look,
Thy grim, self-righteous smile, or hollow sneer,
Nor search for names in Cant's fastidious book,
For what has been believed or practised here;
Scan thine own creed, thy cherished dogmas dear,
There, wert thou not with prejudices blind,
Things as adverse to reason would appear—
To Nature's laws—to interests of mankind—
To all that God in love and mercy has designed.

XIII.

Where have I wandered in my reverie?
List, lo! there Cora* strikes the astonished eye;

* Cora Linn.—The uppermost fall is Bonniton Linn, a cascade of about thirty feet in height. The next below is Cora Linn, where the water takes three distinct leaps, each apparently as high as that of Bonniton. Between these two falls the course of the water is prodigiously rapid and perturbed. Its channel is contracted among rocks and precipices, and in some places it struggles through a

In one wild fit of frantic revelry
The waves of Clutha tumble from on high,
And all the deafening echoes round reply;
And hoary mists their dewy wings expand,
And radiance darting from the azure sky,
Bids o'er the deep an infant iris stand,
A path for fairy feet to trip from either strand.

XIV.

Whate'er of beautiful, sublime, or great,
That either heart, or eye, or ear can crave;
The foaming waterfall's o'erpowering state,
The threatening rock, the alcove, and the cave,
The rifted tower that frowns above the wave,
The streamlet's song, the breath, the bloom of flowers,
The melody of birds, that gay or grave,
Tell forth their loves or griefs among the bowers—
Are here, and much that wings can lend to languor's hours.

chasm of not more than four feet in width. Its sides consist of walls of rock, equi-distant, and wonderfully regular, the jutting points of which are covered with natural shrubbery, and in whose crevices nestle numerous flocks of birds. Upon a rock above Cora Linn, on the southern bank of the river, stands a ruined castle, behind which is a middle-aged mansion, and behind which again there is a still more modern and splendid mansion-house, called *Corehouse*. A pavilion, erected above a century ago, stands on the opposite bank of the stream, as a station for observing the fall. —*Chambers.*

XV.

But musing thus on Nature's wondrous plan,
It seems a source of sadness and of pain,
To note the transitory hours of man,
While meaner things for centuries remain!
Even so Eternal Wisdom did ordain;
'Tis therefore best, whate'er our state betide,
Let us be wise, nor dare the heavens arraign,
The language shun of discontent or pride
And where God's hand we trace, let resignation guide.

LANARK, *June*, 1840.

MARTHA OF MYRETON, OR "THE MAIDEN STONE."*

Fair Martha dwelt by Devon's stream,
Old Myreton's only child,
And lovely as the dewy rose
That blooms in trackless wild;

And gentle as the summer's breath,
When day has sunk to rest;
And guileless as the prattler dear
Upon its mother's breast.

* This striking relic lies in the churchyard of Tullybody, Clackmananshire, within a few feet of the church wall, and is still in good preservation, although the melancholy event with which it is connected, is said to have taken place about 400 years ago. Part of the lid or covering, however, has been removed: what remains is a stone nearly two feet thick, and wrought like the coping of a roof. The church is a little low building, and is now used as a place of sepulture by the noble family of Abercromby, and bears a tablet to the memory of the hero of Alexandria. There is no door on that side of the church where the "Maiden Stone" lies, which, according to tradition, was built up at the instance of the Reverend Seducer.

And well she loved to ease the load
Of poverty and care,
And smooth the pillow to the head
Of sickness and despair.

And many sought fair Martha's love—
The wealthy and the wise,
The warrior in his panoply,
The courtier in disguise;

The love-lorn minstrel lingered oft
Around her father's place,
And deemed it bliss upon the path
Her fairy foot to trace.

But Martha viewed them all with pain,
Her answer still was "nay;"
For first love's wild delicious throb
Had given her heart away.

Young Beaton, Tullibody's priest,
Of manly beauty rare,
Was learned, but, ah, his heart was false,
As outward form was fair.

And Martha loved him with that love
Which fixes upon one
Dear object, and bereft of this,
For ever is undone.

Which too, too well the villain knew ;
But here we draw the veil
Above one portion of our dark
And melancholy tale.

And now fair Martha shunned the light,
And every human eye ;
Forgot her gentle cares and joys,
And only wished to die.

The hind beheld her oft, 'tis said,
When dubious was the dawn,
Glide like a spectre through the wood,
Or o'er the dewy lawn.

And pale, pale grew her lovely cheek,
And languid was her eye ;
Her slender form seemed e'en too weak
To heave the deep drawn sigh.

Yet never would she deign to name
The source of all her woe,
Nor ever made a single plaint,
Or bade a tear to flow.

At length, when midnight cold and lone
Was o'er the Ochils spread,
And stars on Devon's teeming vale
Their placid lustre shed,

Round Myreton's grief-struck halls arose
A hymn as sweet as when
The friends that parted were by death,
Are joined in heaven again.

Her weeping parents Martha called,
While hectic's fatal streak,
Like sunset on the lily's leaf,
Illumed her faded cheek.

"The hour at last is come," she said,
"I long have wished to see,
And soon I hope to find a home
From sin and suffering free.

"If still you love, or e'en regard,
Your lost, your ruined one,
Oh! then, let this my last request,
In all be strictly done.

"That my poor worn and wasted frame
Encofined be in stone,
And by the church door closely laid,
Nor mould nor turf thereon;

"That as *he* passes out and in,
It still may meet *his* view."
She stretched her small, thin, trembling hand,
And breathed, "a long adieu."

And like some lovely tender flower,
Of timeless storms the prey,
Stript from its drooping parent stem,
In death fair Martha lay.

Those strange sweet notes again were heard,
But distant more they seemed,
Yet wildly sweet as aught of which
E'er rapt enthusiast dreamed.

Then all around was sadly still,
Like silence of the tomb,
Or that before the livid bolt
Has seamed the desert's gloom.

And Myreton's age is childless now,
He rends his hoary hair,
For bootless words, or e'en for tears,
Too deep is his despair.

Poor Martha's hest was all fulfilled,
And still the stones we see,
That tell a tale of love misplaced,
And priestly perfidy.

Alloa. *October.* 1845.

ALFRED GRÆME; OR, THE FATAL LIKENESS.

Retired from courtly pomp and power,
In old Dundonald's stalwart tower
The good King Robert dwelt: and e'en
At sylvan sports but seldom seen;
Nor fleeting years as yet had shed
Their snows upon the monarch's head,
Enough to quench the spirit's flame,
And sap the vigour of the frame.
His early love* was in the grave,
And like a frozen, sunless cave,
The generous monarch's heart became,
When died Rowallan's peerless dame.

Where Shewalton moorland to the west
Expands its bleak and barren breast,
There stood a stately forest then,
Well known to Ayrshire archermen.
For many a gallant stag was there,
And wild boar in his bosky lair;
And, white as Ailsa's crest of snow,
The mountain bull, a dangerous foe;

* The beautiful Elizabeth Mure, daughter of Sir John Mure of Rowallan, Kilmarnock.

Though now degenerate, 'tis the same
At Cadzow seen, and Chillingham:
The first in Scott's high strains has rung—*
The last has been by Foster sung,
With all the graceful ease and fire
That mark the manly Borderer's lyre.†

Stern winter's hand had bound the soil,
And laid the snow on steep Ben-Ghoil;
Like mirror lay the cold blue sea,
Scarce heard its evening lullaby;
With graceful sweep the white sea-mew
Sailed to his home in headland blue;
And island skiffs, their journey made,
Soon lost were in the landward shade.

The monarch, in his secret bower,
Enjoyed the soul-ennobling hour;
But, ere the woodland and the height,
Had sunk in sombre shades of night,
And tapers glimmered o'er the plain,
Like reason on the drunkard's brain,
With something of importance fraught,
His page, De Werter, audience sought.

* The well-known ballad of "Cadzow Castle," by Sir Walter Scott.

† "Chillingham Bull Hunt," a ballad, by William Air Foster. See the Local Historian's Table Book for Northumberland and Durham, Legendary Division, vol. ii. p. 258. Published by A. Richardson, Newcastle-upon-Tyne. 1844.

De Werter's infant hours had known
The vales where sweeps the rapid Rhone;
Of features stern, and sable browed
As pinion of the thunder cloud;
Yet finer form than his ne'er trode
The surface of earth's verdant clod.

The ranger and De Werter long
Had been at feud from trifling wrong:
The former was of Celtic line,
M'Coll, from banks of deep Loch-Fyne,
With amplest quantity supplied
Of the foul fumes of Highland pride,
And Nature ne'er more cunning gave
To one designing, sordid slave;
One aim, and one alone he knew,
Self-interest ever kept in view;
As for his creed, 'twas of that kind
Which always orthodox we find,
Although the owner chance to go
From Guinea's sun to Lapland's snow.
Fawning and flattering was he
To all above his own degree,—
To equals treacherous, and to all
Dependants as tyrannical;
Grim envy never in her reign
Held more obsequious serf in chain;
Nor e'er was human kind disgraced
By aught more basely double-faced.

But why, you'll say, a verse bestow
On one so despicably low?
Because (although it may seem hard
To be believed) he was a bard:
Such freaks Dame Nature sometimes plays,
Nor from her laws eternal strays.

Although the King was in that mood
When most he wished for solitude,
With courtesy a little strained,
The artful page an audience gained!
And thus, "My liege it grieves me I
Should so disturb your privacy;
And more, since what I wish to state,
Does fellow-servant implicate;
But duty dictates, and I must
Obey, which pleads excuse (I trust)."

"Ho!" said the King, and waved his hand
Impatient, silence to command:
"De Werter, I have known you now
Since thirteen summers bronzed your brow;
Though others oft have failed, of you
Have ne'er known aught save good and true;
But give your message and begone,
For much I long to be alone."

Somewhat abashed De Werter stood,
Despite his ease and fortitude,—

Fumbled his cap, his fingers ran
Through his long locks, and thus began :

" 'Twas yester morn, at break of dawn,
Returning o'er the westward lawn,
Upon M'Coll by chance I came,
His horse o'erloaded quite with game ;
His finger on his lip he laid,
And, scowling, pointed to his blade,
Then took that dangerous path whence we
Can sometimes soonest reach the sea ;
I followed, and at distance stood
On shore, in covert of the wood ;
A stranger barque was in the bay,
The boat came dashing through the spray,
Received the game, and backward hied,
Nor swifter aught e'er skimmed the tide."

King Robert started to his feet
As youth's high pulse again had beat ;
The page he bade a moment wait,
Th' apartment paced with pensive gait :

" 'Tis strange my lenity should lead
That miscreant still to darker deed !"
He said ; " Nor do I know the times
I've overlooked his faults and crimes ;
What pity ! nor in east or west
Is one of half the skill possessed.

Go, find M'Coll, and tell him, he,
To-morrow, here, at noon must be :
A different turn we'll take ; and, stay,
Bid Alfred Græme, without delay,
Attend, and bring his harp along ;
Perchance the magic powers of song
May bid awhile these pangs depart,
That feed upon the fading heart."

There seems but for M'Coll to be
One course, and that the gallows-tree ;
His is a hopeless case indeed,
With whom even mercy can't succeed.

Where Aven's sterile wilds are spread
The youthful minstrel had been bred ;
His sire had fallen in feudal strife,
Left a young son and wealthless wife ;
Of gentle lineage was the dame
Had wed, for love, the handsome Græme ;
And by this foul, imprudent sin,
Incurred the hatred of her kin.

In form, in visage, and in mien,
The bard was what his sire had been :
His features cast in Grecian mould—
His flowing locks like links of gold—
His form erect as lance or spear,
And agile as the bounding deer ;

So good, so wise he was withal,
At once beloved in cot and hall;
Vice from his presence slunk away,
As from the light the beast of prey;
Licentious jest, and its acclaim,
Were hushed at sight of Alfred Græme.

The crafty page, and minstrel bland,
Were rivals for a maiden's hand—
The beauteous Mary, called in tale
And toast, the "Flower of Irwindale."

But Mary loved the minstrel youth
With first affection's fervent truth;
Though hopeful still, the other swain
Had long preferred his suit in vain.

As David charmed, with tuneful string,
The fiend that troubled Israel's king,
So Alfred Græme possessed the power
To soothe his master's moody hour.

Nor wonder; for his worthy bard
The monarch held a high regard,—
Had given him lands—a goodly cot,
To smoothe his mother's hapless lot.

Attentive still to duty's call,
With harp he soon appeared in hall,

Obeisance made, his hand along
The strings he swept, and raised his song:
He sung Rowallan's hoary towers,
Of Carmel's stream, of Carmel's flowers,
Of mutual love's delightful hour,
Beneath the fragrant greenwood bower.

Awhile the monarch seemed to be
Dissolved in pleasing reverie;
Anon, and down his visage wan
The big hot tears profusely ran;
And, ere the song was well essayed,
A signal to the bard he made
To check the unpropitious strain,
Who, heedless of the list'ner's pain,
Was borne triumphant by his theme,
Like swimmer on the rising stream.

To war's red page he next did turn,
And sung the field of Bannockburn,—
The hosts embattled on the plain—
The royal Bruce—De Bohun slain—
The shock, the shout, the reeling foe—
The haughtiest crests of England low,
Beneath the brand of mountaineer,
Or red resistless Carrick spear;
And through the battle's stormy tide,
Like angel of destruction ride,
Fierce Edward Bruce, who, sad to tell!
At Erin's sceptre grasping—fell;

And lies on Faughart's* dreary height,
Without a stone to tell the site.

Edina! blush thou at the thought!
Of all thy wonders art has wrought,
Not one perpetuates the name
Of Bruce, of Wallace, or of Græme;
Yet, statues in thy streets the while
Stand to the vilest of the vile.

The cold round moon had risen high,
In ocean of a cloudless sky,
With all the glittering orbs embossed,
Of heaven's resplendent, countless host—
So beautiful, they seemed to be
Ordained to burn eternally.
Nor sound the wistful ear could mark
But gentlest sigh of forest dark;
Or bittern's boom, or bau-dog's bay,
As stranger sought the castle's way;
Or the vexed ocean's mellowed roar,
From some lone island's rocky shore.

Adown a narrow well-trod path,
Through clumps of gorse and blasted heath—
In those rude days the only course
To Irwin, or for foot or horse—

* The churchyard of Faughart lies on the top of a hill, about two miles north of Dundalk. Many of the churchyards in Ireland have a very slovenly and repulsive appearance; but that of Faughart is one of the worst in this respect that we met with.

De Werter passed with speed of flight,
In cloak with northern furs bedight;
The dress was Alfred's, and a thing
He prized, as guerdon of the King.
The page in frolic took the loan,
And, tittering, as he tried it on,
Was heard to say, "This joke may some
More favoured people keep at home;
And should she me for Alfred take,
Some good discovery I may make."

Nor darkling, e'en might lover's eye
The counterfeit, at first, espy;
Their stature and their gait the same,
Though not more wide the snow and flame
Than either face—deceit and truth,
Or wrinkled age and rosy youth.

Close by that path the ranger lay,
Like tiger watching for his prey;
He heard the footstep, left his den,
And, muttering "Alfred," crouched again.

An hour had fled, the bard dismissed
Was free to go where'er he'd list;
Descending to the hall anon,
He found his favourite cloak was gone;
At once his rival's round him flung,
And through the outward portal sprung.

His heart was gay, his foot was light,
He gazed on glories of the night,
And every star that beamed above
Drew lustre from his Mary's love.

A hawthorn copse he'd nearly made,
Where still M'Coll held ambuscade;
Some happy thought had just the while
Rode forth on sunshine of a smile,—
Ah! little dreamed th' enraptured swain
That never should he smile again.

From that dark ranger's deadly yew,
The shaft in vain but seldom flew;
And such his strength, nor high, nor low,
In all the west could bend his bow.
His lair the minstrel just had passed—
"I have him now," he said, "at last;"
Full stretch the keen-winged bolt he drew,
Right to the mark the weapon flew—
Behind the shoulder blade it sunk,
And life's stream at the fountain drunk.

As falls the dove, with pinions broke,
Beneath the falcon's fatal stroke,
So fell the youth—or said, or sighed
His Saviour's name, and, turning—died.

North from the castle's verdant mound,
An unhewn column still is found,

Hard by an arch that spans the way
Where iron-harnessed meteors play,
'Twas here by fell assassin's aim,
Of life was reft young Alfred Græme.

Where once his trim-built cot was seen,
Where neighb'ring swains would blithe convene,
When twilight shades had wrapped the plain,
And rose the harp's entrancing strain;
Where age would weep, and youth would gaze,
To hear the tales of ancient days;
Though other trace has long been gone,
As "Harperland"* it still is known.

* A farm on the estate of Sir John Cunningham, Bart. of Fairlie, Dundonald.

THE LOUDON CAMPAIGN.*

"O! wad some power the giftie gie us
To see oursells as ithers see us."

Attention! all ye martial band,
The bulwarks of our native land,
On Albion's shores, on foreign strand,
By Ganges' tide,
Or where Canadian forests grand
Stretch far and wide.

No seas of blood, no hills of slain,
No blazing cities swell my strain;
No widow's tears, nor orphan's mane—
For what are they,

* In the summer of 1823, the Marquis of Hastings, after many years spent in the "Land of the Sun," returned to his seat of Loudon Castle, on which occasion a part of the Ayrshire Cavalry and Kilmarnock Volunteers marched thither to congratulate the worthy nobleman.

When viewed wi' Loudon's great campaign?
Mere children's play.

When Hastings back frae India came,
The worthy chief to welcome hame
Our "Dandies" had resolved, and Fame
Said wine and wassail
Profuse, should celebrate the same
At Loudon Castle.

The Cavalry, wi' some persuasion,
Agreed to serve on this occasion;
But, previous, they got intimation
That nae flesh, but
Such as was void of animation,
Was to be cut.

'Twas tauld in Killie a' that week,
That five large owsen, fat and sleek,
Were kilt, that Yeomanry might streek
Their jaws wi' pleasure,
And "Dandies'" bellies get a keek
Beyond stay measure.

Besides five score o' sheep, as fat
As ever walloped in a pat,
And routh o' drink, the demon that
Has been man's ruin
Since e'er auld father Noah's vat
Was set a brewin'.

There was a chiel, baith lank and lean,
Wha had at mony a muster been
In bygane time; but on the green,
In war's array,
The sycophant had not been seen
For mony a day.

Whene'er he heard o' the affair,
He went directly unto prayer:
"O Lord!" said he, "my life but spare
"Till that great day,
"And thine ain servant shall his share
"O' dainties hae."

The very thought o't made him smile;
He gathered out his kit meanwhile,
And cleaned, wi' perseverin' toil,
His firelock rusty;
And fleas out-flanked in gallant style
On's garments dusty.

Even in his sleep he couldna rest;
For Fancy out the table drest,
An' then he'd roar, like ane possest,
And, starting, cry,
"Slice down the beef; well, I protest;
"Fair play, stand by!"

Anither ane, wi' Leith-walk face,
A first performer of grimace;

A patent hand at prayer or grace;
But ready he
Was aye (when gain was in the ease),
Wi' loop or lee.

As clergy hear o' coming cash,
As gossips seize some new-hatched clash,
As trembling drunkards face-ward dash
Their *morning* dear,
So did this curious moral mash
The tidings hear.

Even, when the hero took the beuk,*
He waled wi' earnest anxious leuk,
Till ance he happened on a neuk
Concerning eatin',
And then he'd read, an' roar, an' smack
Himsel' a-sweatin'.

The drummer o' this warlike corps
Had fasted for a week before
The raid took place; and aften swore
He would lay in
At least a lucky fortnight's store
In his wee skin.

That mornin', when they marched awa',
He said that, "roasted, boiled, or raw,

* Family worship.

" He'd eat a badger, tail an' a',
" Without a scunner!"
Sae keen and craving was his maw—
Sae ripe for dinner.

The day was fair, an' aff they set,
Hope hoverin' o'er them—dear coquette;
Mars looked ower heaven's gowden yett,
The group to scan;
But turned his godship in a pet,
And thus began—

" O, Jupiter! was e'er a sight
" Like this beheld in heaven's light—
" Since cranes and pigmies closed in fight,
" Or mice and frogs
" Displayed their direful earthquake might
" In bluidy bogs?

" Should now some hostile crowd appear,
" Wi' brickbats, stanes, or sic like gear,
" We soon wad see them, struck wi' fear,
" Tak' down the road,
" As sheep, when hangs upon their rear
" The panting tod.

" Dear Britain, should it be thy hap
" Again to face another Nap,
" Just lea' thae chiels to tent the crap,
" And shoot the craw,

" The ' Greys' will better fill a gap—
" Or ' Forty-twa.'

" A chiel might dread as muckle skaith,
" Frae turkey-cock when in his wrath,
" Or goosie peckin' in her freath
" On nest a-sittin',
" Or drove o' big brown rattons, faith,
" When gaun a-flittin'."

Thus having said, the God of War
Resumed in wrath his blood-stained car;
Jove sent his thunderbolts afar
Till heaven resounded;
And every orb, and distant star
Winked quite confounded.

As brisk they marched along the way,
The drummer twice was heard to say,
" I fin' the smell; my boys, huzza!
" The gravy's spillin';
" But faith, we'll have a glorious day,
" I'll hold a shillin',"

The carrion corps behint them flew,
(Puir simple birds) they little knew
These warriors never weapons drew
On livin' boukes,
Nor ever cut entrenchment through,
Except the cook's.

But when a swarm of flies they'd meet,
They laid them sprawlin' at their feet;
And mony a cleg was made retreat
Ere came they till
The "bonny wood and braes," sung sweet
By Tannahill.

As hens besiege the thrashing-floor,
As ducks, in frost, a pond before,
As craws upon a hillside hoar,
Portending storm,
So by the Castle 'gan the corps
At length to form.

Out came the gentles ane an' a',
And, spite of breedin's rigid law,
Scarce was supprest the loud guffaw;
And heads were hung,
Lips bitten, faces turned awa',
Whence bluid maist sprung!

But first impressions being o'er,
They roosed and thanked the 'foresaid corps—
When laigh's the lintel o' the door
We needs must stoop it,
Nowhere of this we've samples more
Than in the poopit.

Young Hastings said, and curled his nose,
"A gang of gipsies, I suppose;

" Or people come to scare the crows;
" Look ye, my Lord,
" A drummer ape, how bluff it goes,
" Upon my word."

But 'tis beyond puir simple John
Their bill of fare to venture on;
Let their ain language speak, anon,
'Twill paint it fine—
" Deil haet, except a bawbee scone,
" An' glass o' wine."

Some fainted wi' convulsive roar,
Some uttered oaths ne'er heard before,
The service some for life forswore,
Wi' frantic air;
Some veterans out in handfuls tore
Their thin gray hair.

Ane mair inclined to feast than fight
His puir wee scone wi' a' his might
He hurled o'erhead, clean out o' sight,
Belike it may
Suffice some comet for a bite,
When scarce o' prey.

A hairum-scairum wabster blade,
Wha laughed at a' things, even dull trade,
A toothpick o' his bayonet made,
Then on his nose

The instrument o' death he laid
Wi' look jocose.

"Waesucks, waesucks," the drummer cried;
"Waesucks," the lengthened glades replied;
To keep his feet the bodie tried,
But, quite o'ercome,
He fell, despite his martial pride,
And brak' the drum.

The birds affrighted couldna sing;
The young anes in the nests took wing;
The cattle gathered in a ring,
As't had been thunder,
The very midges cease to fling—
But 'twas nae wonder.

And, to their shame, in this sad plight,
Part of the heroes took to flight,
And into Galston, as in height
Of summer sun,
Maddened wi' heat and insects' bite,
Whole herds will run.

The bairns and dogs the coming row
Announced, with shout and loud bow-wow,
Auld grannies left their rocks o' tow,
And cripple bodies
Limpit, and scraiched as on a knowe
Ye've seen young hoodies.*

* Carrion crows.

Bald-headed men forgot their hats,
Wi' tails like boas ran the cats;
Fast to their burrows took the rats
That were a-roamin',
Sic was the stoure, it seemed to bats
The hour o' gloamin'!

I've got an honest fellow's word
For this, or 'twould seem half absurd,—
The town clock stopped,—an ancient sword
Frae sheath did drop,
A fiddle, o' its ain accord,
Played Johnny Cope!*

Yet on the warriors strode, as bold
As hares, or Parthian troops of old,
Or fleecy tenants of the fold,
When thunder roars;
Or the dun deer, when o'er the wold
The far hunt pours.

And took (how strange!) withouten toil,
Or fire, or smoke, or battle broil,
An inn, and maut, and roast, and boil,
At once o'ercame,
And *heavy* laden wi' the spoil,
Went glorious hame.

* Ancient warriors used to draw omens from their sword blades. When Lord Lovat was born the swords in the mansion-house hall leaped spontaneously from the scabbard.—*See Lady of the Lake.*

Their " inexpressibles" sae white,
And dazzling in the morning light,
By this appeared a waefu' sight,
Baith black and brown,
Some prayed for cover o' the night
To face the toun.

Behint the dykes, and to the wuds
Some took, and turned the foresaid duds,
Came forth as fresh as burstin' buds,
By ane, 'tis said,
This novel game o' cheat-the-suds
Was three times played.*

But laith am I to tell the fray
That raise among them by the way;
Sic civil wars again, O pray!
We ne'er may hear of,
Which ended, as historians say,
Before the Sheriff.

The greater number o' the squad
Cam' hungry hame, wi' hearts right sad;
The vera Major swore, " by Gad
" It was a shame,
" And brought a stain—an odium bad
" On Hastings' name."

* A fact.

The drummer raised his plaintive wail,
The rocks gave back the dolefu' tale,
Yea, and the sober evening gale,
That swept alang,
Bore far away o'er hill and dale,
His mournfu' sang.

Ye who these tragic lines peruse,
While tears (nae doubt) shall flow profuse,
Should Hope hereafter lift your views,
Watch ye the cummer,
And mind how sair she did abuse
Our frien', the drummer.

THE FORTUNETELLER.

It was in eighteen thirty-nine,
The month of June, the weather fine;
But so confounded hot—'bout Ayr
Mad dogs were running here and there—
Mad politicians everywhere.

One afternoon of this same time,
A brewer, smith, and man of rhyme,
Rather a kind of kittle set,
In the Turf Inn of Irvine met,
And drove the joke a while and tale,
Over a jug of Geordie's ale.

Whether it was the mania then
That in the shire struck dogs and men;
Or whether 'twas the fumes of ale
That in their craniums did prevail,
Must under covert still remain,
Till some intelligence we gain,
By steam conveyance, or balloon,
From that queer planet called the moon;

Howe'er, to Jenny Hooks* they'd go,
And learn their fortunes—weal or wo!

'Twas fixed upon—a house was got
Contiguous to the beldam's cot;
And soon did Jenny 'mong them stand,
With pregnant look and cards in hand.

His bardship was her first essay—
But Jenny, Jenny, well-a-day!
Thou could'st not have been farther wrong
Had'st thou declared that old was young,
That black was white, that east was west,
That Satan was a heavenly guest!

The roguish rhymster blew her still
With words of wonder at her skill;
And swore by Burns's soul, she'd been
At night with Nick upon the green;
And had she lived in times of old,
When earth was Superstition's fold,
Had been condemned to end her days
Amid the faggot's crackling blaze.

The son of Vulcan next would know
How Fate had laid his lot below,

* A notorious character of the Endor school, to whom persons of all classes resort. So much for the boasted intelligence of the nineteenth century.

And cut the cards—whose dirty leaves
First told he was beset with thieves;
Who knows not that;—'tis my belief
The world is just one giant thief:
And could with ample demonstration
Substantiate the observation.

Next, Fortune's favours came along
So quick, so heavy, and so throng,
They trode each other's heels, and cried,
"Come, devil take you, stand aside!"—
Things that are like to come to pass
When o'er the planets grows the grass;
Or, drunk with tippling over night,
The sun forgets the world to light;
"But time would fail to tell of all,"
As saith my friend the apostle Paul.

By this the brewer 'gan to think
Sans hops and malt was Jenny's drink
He proffered not the powerful pelf,
When Jenny looked her horrid self;
With withering glance the group surveyed,
Rose, tossed the glass—her exit made!

But now the glorious things with which
The smith's futurity was rich,
Produced by Jenny's magic slight,
In all their galaxy of light,

As wax the man of iron made—
He home was on a cart conveyed.

O muse! ye jingling jilt, fie shame,
Tell truth for once—"the smith was lame."

* * * *

* * * *

That stately youth, with giant force,
That there restrains the fiery horse;
First at the sports of summer's e'en,
That shake the sod of village green;
And round the glowing winter hearth,
The lifestring of the rustic mirth;
Nor will the precedency yield
To one in labours of the field.

His fair was coy, as fair will prove
Sometimes, when deepest drowned in love;
Beneath th' eclipse he sought for guide
The wily witch of Irvine side.

And mark that venerable man,
Conspicuous ever in the van
Of those that seek the house of prayer,
And long an office-bearer there—
His goods were stolen. With truth 'tis said,
He sought notorious Jenny's aid,
And rushed against the threefold fence,
Of Scripture, Reason, Common-sense.

Irvine, the Virtues long have made
Their bowers within thy sheltering shade!
What! sermonising? lift thine eye
And scan that fair one passing by,
In all the pageantry and power
Of youth and beauty's noontide hour.

Yes, Art and Nature both have played
Their freaks to form the matchless maid;
Even on that high brow's beauteous swell
The amorous sunbeam loves to dwell;
Or, through the silken shade will peep,
Like lover o'er his idol's sleep:
Those bright blue eyes might be the theme
For life of minstrel's raptured dream,
New charms disclosing day by day,
As fled the swift sweet hours away.

That swimming majesty of tread,
That air, that symmetry, might wed
The misanthrope to ways of men,
The hermit to the world again;
Yea, and beneath that hand of snow,
The bright designs will sometimes glow;
She sings, 'tis as if angel gave
To earth the music of a wave
Of harmony, from that great sea—
Companion of eternity.
Yet this accomplished, peerless queen,
Hath also with the beldam been.

O man! of all things here we see
Thou art the greatest mystery;
Thou chaos in contention dipt,
Thou heterogeneous nondescript;
God's word and Nature's law aside
Are set, as inclinations guide;
And spite of every high pretence,
The child art thou of circumstance.

Ye who profess the creed sublime,
That man shall, at some future time,
Divest him of his native will
To shun the good and seek the ill,
And, by his own intrinsic aid
Arise, in moral light arrayed;
Turn, in your intellectual pride,
Survey the witch of Irvine side!

MEDITATIONS AND REFLECTIONS.

I.

High on a rock of Mona's rugged coast,
Like mateless seabird, let me sit a while,
Watching the ranks of ocean's snowy host,
And list their music in the dark defile,
As the young morning lends her sweetest smile
To gild those precipices, dark and dun;
Like Friendship on this world of selfish guile,
Or filial love, that in some beauteous one
Illumes the fevered couch, when sands of life are run.

II.

Thus, were they cast upon creation's morn,
With horrid grandeur hanging on each brow?
Or, by the vengeance of the earthquake torn
Or, by the deluge left as they are now;
Or, has the thunder taught their heads to bow?
A deep voice seems to answer solemnly—
"Frail mortal, dwell not on the why, or how,
"Behold all fair, and filled with good to thee,
"And all that lives and moves, in earth, in air, and sea."

III.

Lo! far around, to utmost range of sight,
How numerous float the inhabitants of air,
Their snowy pinions glittering in the light!
Hark! their wild cries of transport and of care.
Alike the deep and dizzy height they dare,
Soar on the blast, or plunge into the wave;
Their lives by Nature's happy laws they wear;
Whilst man, oft appetite's or passion's slave,
Diseased, dishonoured, sinks to an untimely grave.

IV.

Go, search the hospital's unwholesome round,
The felon's dungeon, and the maniac's cell,
The workhouse cold, the churchyard's dreary mound,
And learn what suicide's history can tell.
Ask what does most the stream of victims swell,
And truth shall answer with a look forlorn—
"INTEMPERANCE, greatest curse since Adam fell;
"Parent of ills, perdition's eldest born;
"Dark cloud without a bow—a night that knows no morn."

V.

Beyond yon shadow on the welkin's verge,
At memory's call, past scenes salute the eye;
The long black streets of Manchester emerge,
And rivers with the fabled Styx that vie;
And chimneys numberless that blot the sky;

The factories pouring human tide on tide,
Stunted and pale, their physiognomy
Of beauty's form and meaning oft denied,
Doomed offerings at the shrine of avarice and pride.

VI.

And note their language as they pass along—
The horrid oath, loud laugh, and jest obscene,
The frequent snatches of the odious song,
The rude remarks on passers-by between;
And lo! the gin-shop opes its jaws unclean,
And shows a mouthful of its daily meal.
Insatiate! long death's leader thou hast been:
Earth's other scourges give a time to heal—
Thy giddy hosts still down to dark destruction reel.

VII.

'Tis night—commotion reigns in street and lane,
And mingling sounds come rolling on the blast,
Like the far murmurs of the wintry main,
Or fire, when raging in some forest vast;
And ever and anon the cab whirls past,
And round reverberates the tavern bell,
And on to ruin crowds are hurrying fast:
Her female finger-posts the pathway tell,
Which Israel's sated king delineates so well.*

Prov. vii.

VIII.

Where yonder gate unfolds its iron wings,
And yields an entrance to the gay saloon,
Whose light around a dazzling lustre flings,
That mocks the glories of the cloudless moon,
Coach upon coach comes clattering up, and soon
Clink go the steps, descends the mincing fair,
Light as the snow-flake, skims the ground, a boon
Of perfume giving to the smoky air.
What gewgaws, jewels, gems, and frippery are there!

IX.

And what a cloud of suffering and sin
Has been, ere furnished was this scene of show?
Vices, and crimes of darkest hue and kin,
All pangs the body and the mind can know—
Hearts broken, floods of tears been made to flow,
And weary limbs through many an irksome hour,
And nakedness, and hunger, all that grow
From selfishness, when backed by Mammon's power—
Youth, manhood, beauty, crushed like to a trodden flower.

X.

That lady, bright as dream of earliest love,
Mark ye the gold upon her bosom shine.
Know that its history's registered above:
The slave's heart burst that dug it from the mine,
Long ere that life had warranted decline—

Scourged, starved, distorted, he had breathed his last,
And that his dying lips had dared repine,
His mangled body to the fowls was cast,
Scarce ratified as man's by those who shuddering past.

* * * * *

XI.

Darkening the distance comes a funeral train,
With all the proud appendages of wo.
Is it the scion of some ancient strain
On whom has fallen the inevitable blow?
Fame, through her thousand trumpets, answereth,
"No—
"One that by trade to princely wealth did rise.
"Much to the church he gave at last, although
"Through life this truth once never met his eyes—
"That God will mercy have, and not a sacrifice."*

XII.

Man! what a strange anomaly art thou!
Tyrant or slave, oppressing or oppressed,
Fighting for wealth or bread with beating brow,
By wants fictitious, imaged ills distressed,
Now by ambition on through peril pressed.
Religion's truths, so beautiful, so plain,
Perverted, mystified, or trimmed, as best
Yields arms to power, or plentitude to gain,
Till what God meant for bliss at last becomes thy bane.

* Hosea vi. 6.

XIII.

Thy creed is formed for thee, and stamped in youth,
As is the seal on wax when it is hot;
And though around should shine enlivening truth
In after years, alas! it matters not;
Thou warr'st thy little hour, art gone, forgot.
And whence come half the ills our life that try?
Earth's teeming cities, solitudes remote,
In tones of tempest "Ignorance" reply,
The deep, the very grave is heard to join the cry.

XIV.

But now the sun has gained meridian height,
And every spot of earth is glad and gay;
The gloomy cavern's mouth itself seems bright,
Like dark deceit, that welcomes to betray;
Old ocean trolls his merry roundelay,
Life drinks enjoyment's limpid fountain free;
And while I thus the happy scene survey,
My soul! what thrilling thoughts arise in thee;
An earnest, and a glance of immortality.

Calf of Man, *May*, 1844.

PATERSON'S ATTEMPT ON THE TEMPLE OF FAME.

I.

In that same year that Navarinian Ned
Sent Turks to Mahomet by hundreds home,
I saw in vision, slumbering on my bed,
High on a cliff, a fair and goodly dome;
Steep was the way that to its portals led,
Up which the sons of men would sweat and foam;
'Twas called the Temple—dwelling-place of Fame,
Where with a favoured few reposed the lofty Dame.

II.

Methought some guardian spirit of the place
Bore me aloft upon his sounding wings,
And set me in the court-yard's ample space,
Far o'er this scene of sublunary things;
And O! how many of the human race,
Goaded by wild ambition's serpent stings,
Strained up the ascent, with danger, toil, and pain!
Were still repulsed, and still returned again!

III.

Others, although with mighty trouble, wrought
Themselves at length into this splendid mansion,
Were cheered by those within, who, no doubt, thought
They had to it a something of pretension;
For these a crown the smiling goddess brought,
Of never-fading flowers of fair expansion;
And every class had marked a separate entry,
Kings, Heroes, Bards, and all such other gentry.

IV.

Down on a long, long, well-worn seat, that stood
Nigh to the door where went the sons of verse in,
I sat, and, with the jealous, selfish brood,
Expected soon to see some little farcing.
I heard 'twas long before the goddess would
Ope unto any—kept them there rehearsing;
And, out of pity, during the probation,
Had found that form for their accommodation.

V.

Scarce had I occupied my seat an hour,
When a loud sound of laughter and of mirth
Burst from within; while, like a thunder shower,
All to the windows sudden rushing forth,
Coughed, sneered, huzzaed, and hooted all their power;
And what to such strange merriment gave birth
Was, that a surgeon-bard, despite the porter,
Had passed the gate—his Pegasus a mortar.

VI.

Whose strong right hand a ponderous pestle bore,
With which his steed he laboured till it rang,
And undismayed, amid the vast uproar,
In strains like those of bedlamite, still sang,
His face had something I've ne'er seen before,
Except in folks that are, as some say, "wrang;"
As for his nose, 'twas like a ripe wall-cherry
Pecked by a blackbird—or a big strawberry.

VII.

His satellites this luminary had:
And this I learned, was their determination,
That though they murdered Truth and put Fame mad,
They'd take possession of her habitation,
A sketch of them would make a sexton sad—
The real cast-off sons of dissipation;
Mere tippling, shirtless, coinless, would-be fops,
That daily scandal deal in ill-frequented shops.

VIII.

One on the front, whose name was Puny Paul,
Held a high place 'mong that enlightened crew:
Purveyor of medicines he was withal,
And poet-laureate to a well-known stew:
Along his cheek was marked the midnight brawl,
In traits conspicuous to the slightest view;
Aye, his whole look and visage were as evil
As he had been vicegerent of the Devil!

IX.

In bare but well-brushed trowsers, coat and hat,
With shirt scarce reaching to his collar-bone,
Followed the next, who, by the name of *Bat*,
Among the sad fraternity was known;
He whirled a cane—had seals, no watch thereat—
His boots with Warren's blacking brightly shone,
Though, by their hollow, loud, and empty knockings,
They told at once his feet were void of stockings!

X.

In widow's weeds of tasteless disarray,
Next in procession came a stately dame;
Though tricky Time had marred her locks with grey,
Proud was her air, and quick her eye of flame,
And much there told she'd rather do than say;
Her sons were numerous, nor unknown to Fame;
As for her daughters, I some few have seen,
To whom Diana might a handmaid been.

XI.

Old Killie she was called, who ne'er had yet
A son who, with success, had swept the lyre;
And this was one adopted, in a fit
Of fondness did she with the rest conspire
To hoodwink Fame, but now 'twas plainly writ
On all she did she rather would retire;
There was a sad, sad something in her mien
I liked not, yet have in a bridegroom seen.

XII.

Last came a lout of most unmeaning face,
Works of the bard he carried in his hand,
And which he hinted, with a queer grimace,
He was to circulate throughout the land.
Yet, from the whole, I easily could trace,
Self did supreme in's estimation stand;
And where he lacked address and penetration,
Had got a substitute called—affectation.

XIII.

With these, and more 'twere dangerous to describe,
Our daring hero safely passed the portal,
Trumpet procured from herald, by a bribe,
And ranked his name among the bards immortal.
Then what a riot rose among the tribe!
Eager they seemed, and keen at the retort all;
Bawled Burns, above the rest, "Do ye no ken,
"The proverb says, 'Self-praise comes stinkin' ben?'"

XIV.

Still all unconscious of their wrath and din,
He only listened to the other band
Echo his tale; then with important grin
Looked round, esteem and notice to command.
The real attitude he then was in,
If fitly drawn, would be a treat most grand;
I've never yet beheld such selfish stare,
Such bold, presumptuous, unbecoming air.

XV.

Betwixt the ground and knocker of the door,
Vast was the distance; therefore, all that came
Had steps to furnish and set up before
They reached it—such the stern decree of Fame.
With stuff that other bards had used of yore,
Our nondescript began his work to frame—
From Campbell, Burns, and Byron stole a share,
And joined it with his own most miserable ware.

XVI.

From a long list, too troublesome to quote,
He pilfered keenly. From religion, too,
Borrowed a deal: whilst he, in inward thought,
Laughed loud at everything of serious hue.
His allied powers, with zeal now burning hot,
Rushed forward—set him on the fabric new—
When, lo! he popped down through it in a trice,
As folks do sometimes when they take to ice.

XVII.

Out rushed a watchman, as the goddess bade,
And of our bardship's collar took a catch;
Said, he believed, that since the world was made,
It ne'er produced such sacrilegious wretch;
Told him how far he had mista'en his trade,
And, of conviction to undo the latch,
He beat him, kicked him, flogged him with a switch,
And gave his scurvy nose a most tremendous twitch!

XVIII.

Down gushed the black contaminated gore,
Like streams of tar beneath the solar ray,
And but a few seconds had elapsed, before
It vermin grew, took feet, and ran away;
A peal of laughter shook the temple o'er,
And next a long and deafening huzza!
Then crammed each sash was, as in expectation
Of execution, or a coronation.

XIX.

"Begone!" cried Goldsmith, "bare-faced, dirty thief!"
"Not fit," quoth Moore, "to wash the dishes here!"
"Of scribblers and plagiarists the chief,"
Said Byron; "hence! feed pigs, and share their cheer!"
"Awa'!" quoth Burns, "this house is scribbler prief—
"We'er needin' nane o' Esculapius' gear!"
Tom Campbell said, "'Tis fruitless here to cope,
"There is not for thy case a single ray of hope!"

XX.

By this our hero and his comic group
Had reached the confines of the farthest gate!
When Justice called the disappointed troop,
And said, "'Twas his inevitable fate,
"'Twas true (she owned), they might despair and droop;
"But she had seen him get his proper weight;

" And that, as said somewhere about Ezekiel,
" Could state, on oath, the whole amount was—Tekel."*

XXI.

Perhaps the greatest farce was yet
To come, but 'tis not in my power to tell—
Before my eyes the figures seemed to flit—
I woke with the ringing of the morning bell.
But, as for what I have already writ,
'Tis quite correct, for I was watching well;
One special evidence can still be seen,
His bardship's nose, whose wound is yet quite green.

* Dan. v. 27.

EVENING THOUGHTS ON THE HEIGHTS OF DUNDONALD.

I.

How sweet the summit of yon lonely hill,
And naked forest's wild and wintry roar!
The deep-toned music of the vagrant rill,
That leaps from cliff to cliff in fragments hoar;
The sea and sky as far as sight can soar,
And fading landscape's melancholy bloom,
Where, from a thousand hearths, the lights once more
Through the dim shade their wonted paths resume,
And variegate the scene, and twinkle through the gloom.

II.

The peaceful sounds that wait on evening's train,
From rock to rock pass lingering along,
And melt melodious on the sighing main,
That, cold and dark, obstreperous and strong,
Spreads his deep waters; sweet the seabird's song
Strays o'er these shores, that heard, in days remote
From Rome's imperial powers, or feudal throng,

Destruction's trumpet, through her brazen throat,
Pour to contending hosts the war-arousing note.

III.

And list! the anvil's ever-echoing knell,
Broke by the breeze—the village evening hum,
The partridge chirping through the dreary dell,
While loud reports from distant sportsmen come;
Irvine's deep moan, now sinking slowly dumb,
Now rising hoarse, as sudden shifts the gale—
The clattering wheels—and in the dusk still some
Laborious rustic whirls his sounding flail,
And far off tells the deep his everlasting tale.

IV.

Now lost the churchyard, gone the tombstones grey,
That silent, teaching, tributary band,
That 'gainst Oblivion's powers, of black array,
O'er the green graves, like watchful sentries stand;
And many a sigh and holy throb command,
When Sabbath summons round the house of prayer
Her crouds promiscuous, and with olive wand
Charms every sound that swims along the air,
And bids each spot around a heavenly aspect wear.

V.

Spring yet shall glad these weary, wasted plains,
This moaning hawthorn deck with blossoms fair,

Call up to keen activity the swains,
And ope the primrose in the noontide glare;
The village youth their summer sports shall share;
Yon sea, so fierce, with dimple scarce be curled,
But to these tombs no change shall tidings bear,
Till earth behold the Archangel's wings unfurled,
And the loud trumpet's voice awake a slumbering world.

VI.

Obscure the spot, and far removed from fame,
No regal sepulchre is here arrayed,
Yet, as I pass, a sigh 'twill sometimes claim;
For here a grandsire's aged dust is laid,
Around whose knees, in infant hours, I've played,
And felt beyond the muse's power to sing,
When bowed the hoary patriarch, and paid
His due devotions to the Almighty King,
Or when with heartfelt strains the rustic dome would ring.

VII.

O! 'mid these wilds had fortune placed my cot,
And bade me daily 'mong their charms to stray,
Climb the grey hill, from revelry remote,
And mark the morning bursting into day,
The seasons rise and softly steal away,
And oft my harp be tuned at fall of night;
When age should come—cold age—and dull decay,
To find a grave in yonder solemn site,
With hopes to rise and shine in everlasting light.

VIII.

Ye mighty oaks, that smile at ocean's blast,
With ivy circled, where the ring-dove rears
Her brood secure—ye shaggy mountains, cast
In Nature's throes, where Time a thousand years
Has wrote—thou tower that dim afar appears,
Where feudal lords in olden time would dwell;
Ye rocks, that shine with evening's crystal tears,
And mournful echo yonder village bell,
Night calls me to my home—dear scenes of youth
farewell!

ON THE DEATH OF MY SISTER, MRS R. PARKER.

"Now my days are swifter than a post."—Job ix. 25.

Our fellow-pilgrims, one by one,
We lose on life's declining way;
And soon a cheerless course we run,
With changing looks and tresses grey;
And things within, without, unfold
To us the world is waxing old.

It seems of yesterday to be,
When hand in hand we went to school;
Or gambolled on the daisy'd lea,
Or watched the minnows in the pool:
And bliss from every object drew,
For all was beautiful and new.

It seems of yesterday to be,
When looked we through the churchyard gate,
Our little kindred's graves to see;
And though we distant deemed the date,
Each other viewed with sob and sigh,
And said "We one day too would die."

It seems of yesterday to be,
When in the long, dark winter night,
Beside our mother's wheel sat we;
The hearth was clean, the fire was bright,
And she would sing some melting lay
Of men, of things long passed away.

And, when the song or tale was o'er,
What simple questions we would start;
Or on the fire intensely pore,
With tearful eyes and lips apart;
Alas, that sweet, that soothing strain,
I'll never hear on earth again.

Upon my father's mouldering breast
I've lived my mother's dust to lay;
The tongue that hushed us both to rest,
Is silent and insensate clay;
That dreary path thou too hast gone,
And we must travel all anon.

It seems of yesterday to be,
When at thy grandsire's knee thou stood,
With blossoms of the hawthorn tree,
And wild-flowers dewy from the wood;
And soft the good old man the while
Would stroke thy head, and fondly smile.

It seems of yesterday to be,
When through the morning's dewy pane

The summer's golden light we'd see
Gild the green hills and distant main:
Those moments in their bright array,
O! God of goodness, where are they?

But where is all the bliss, the bane,
The sunny hours, the deeds sublime;
The most that mortals may attain,
In annals of departed time?
Earth's mightiest ones, forgot at last,
Are swallowed in the boundless past.

And now, within the grave's embrace—
Two little children by thy side—
Thou art; and six hast left to trace
The world's rough shore, and stem its tide,
Through much unkindness, many a snare,
And all without a mother's care.

And should they meet those ills of life
That rend the heart, and blanch the cheek,
Perhaps, unequal to the strife,
With eyes suffused, unseen, they'll seek
The spot where thou liest lone and low,
To tell the senseless turf their wo.

Years shall away on viewless wing,
The sky as bright, the earth as green,
And soon some laughing hour shall bring,
When none shall know that thou hast been;

Perchance some one in passing by,
May say, " This dust once lived as I."

And is it all of life we gain,
A gleam to light us to the grave?
A sigh, a tear, upon the main
The crested foam, and ere the wave
On which it rides has drunk the dies
Of light, 'tis lost to mortal eyes?

Yes, this is all! and 'tis a boon
The Godhead hath in goodness given;
The dawning of that day whose noon
Shall rise beneath his smile in heaven;
And brighter still, and brighter be,
Through ages of eternity.

'Tis ours to adore the great First Cause,
To practise love to fellow-man;
To steer our course by Nature's laws,
And spend with joy our little span;
The rainbow, butterfly, and flower,
Are beauteous in the fleeting hour.

Our fellows pilgrims, one by one,
We lose on life's declining way;
And soon a cheerless course we run,
With changing looks, and tresses grey;
And things within, without, unfold
To us the world is waxing old.

CHRIST WEEPING OVER JERUSALEM.

"And when he was come near, he beheld the city and wept over it."
LUKE xix. 41.

JERUSALEM'S temple, towers, and bulwarks lay
In all the splendours of the eastern day,
And in the blaze of palaces, embossed
With gems, and gold, the astonished eye was lost;
While the bright tombs of men of ancient days
Shed their far lights and shadows on the gaze;
And the sad sites of thousand glories gone,
Diffused what sensibility alone
Can gather from the hoary wrecks of time,
And o'er them weep with sympathy sublime.

And there the High Priest to the temple trode,
While far behind his shining garments flowed;
But, O! how lacking in the important part,
The inward man—the adorning of the heart;
Proud, grasping ever both at power and gold,
To all improvement still a barrier bold;
For the same spirit through the race has run,
Of every creed and clime beneath the sun.

Beauty, sweet beauty, gorgeously arrayed,
Shone in each path—the matron and the maid;
The tender infant, grasping in its fears
The wall; the patriot of an hundred years,
Whose furrowed cheek and faded eye were wet
For the far sun of Israel's glory set:
As sits the watchful spider in her snare,
Sat the shrewd lawyer—and all pompous there
The self-adoring Pharisee—while fleet
The man of business hurried through the street.

And there the war-horse pranced, and rushed amain
To phantom battle o'er the dusty plain,
And formed the hostile squadrons that had known
The stern extremities of every zone;
Yet the same dauntless and unconquered host,
In Lybia's glow, and Caledonia's frost,
And here to wondering multitudes unfurled
Their arts of war that had subdued the world;
While, by the portal of the strong-built tower—
Shade of their crimes, and shelter of their power—
The sullen sentinel, with tread profound,
Flung the defiance of his looks around.
The city smiled, the melancholy smile
That wretched beauty sheds, yet weeps the while;
The trace of dignity the prince retains,
Dragged at the conqueror's chariot wheel in chains.
Messiah came!—benignant was his mien,
His followers few—as Truth's have often been;

Unknown to pomp and pageantry, that wait
Around the form of son of regal state;
Though his it was salvation to bestow—
Theirs, oft to plunge whole provinces in woe.

He paused! beheld the dismal scene dilate,
Of Israel's present, past, and future state;
Beheld her love in happier period shown,
When God she followed in a land unsown,
And heartfelt songs amid the desert rose,
Of trust in him and triumph o'er their foes;
And warnings often given, but given in vain,
And mercies offered ne'er to be again;
The woes from heaven by obstinacy wrung,
That in thick closing clouds above her hung,
While she beneath infatuated slept,
Till lo! the Saviour she rejected—wept!

LAMENT FOR ROBERT TANNAHILL.

My muse, in showers let sorrow's rain
Descend, awake thy saddest strain,
And call on Nature to sustain
Thy simple skill;
Her warmest worshipper is gane—
Meek Tannahill.

Lives there a man that half but knows
A poet's feelings, frailties, woes;
His heart's sad ebbs and overflows;
How melted will
His soul be o'er the life's sad close
Of Tannahill!

His meed of fame he asked—nor high
His claims were stretched,* yet could deny

* "When the man of taste and discrimination reads these pieces, he will no doubt find passages that might have been better; but his censures may be qualified with the remembrance that they

The cold harsh world, with jaundiced eye,
Adjudging ill;
But "wounded worth forbade reply"
From Tannahill.

The rustic heel can tread the rose,
The stream soil that in silver flows,
Seduction with a thousand throes
Sweet Beauty kill;
Neglect and Envy crush with woes
A Tannahill.

O world invidious! loth art thou
The laurels to the living brow
Of lowly minstrel to allow;
What serves thy skill,
Displayed in lengthened wailings now
For Tannahill.

Go, in thy selfish thoughtless pride,
But placed in hall by Beauty's side,
While woke by Music's vocal tide
Is rapture's thrill;
How wronged, thou then may'st there decide,
Was Tannahill.

are the effusions of an unlettered mechanic, whose hopes as a poet extend no farther than to be reckoned respectable among the minor bards of his country."—*Preface to Tannahill's Poems.*

His strains are sung, his numbers read
From palace to the lowliest shed,
'Mong burning deserts, mountains clad
With glaciers chill;
While, without stone to mark his bed,
Sleeps Tannahill.

But, as bemoaning Minstrels tell,
When visits spring "Gleniffer's dell,"
Rich on the "crawflower's early bell"
The dews distil,
The tears of Nature's "bonny sel',"
For Tannahill.

When the last sun of summer's shed
On huge Benlomond's lofty head,
And far is sunk in ocean's bed,
Clouds linger still,
Streaks of deep mourning purple red,
For Tannahill.

When yields the aged year her pride,
Is heard by planting's sunny side,
Where sweet the "woodland burn" does glide,
The redbreast shrill,
The voice of Nature's empire wide,
For Tannahill.

When Winter, with resistless power,
Sweeps through the halls of Stanley Tower,

'Tis said, at midnight's awful hour,
His tempests will
Mourn with the spirit of the bower
For Tannahill.

And long shall kindred genius come
And linger pensive by his tomb;
When earth's proud potentates the womb
Of darkness fill,
Verdant the memory shall bloom
Of Tannahill.

A VISIT FROM THE SHADE OF SHAKSPERE.

O Erin! hapless Erin! where
Shall we behold a land so fair,
So fertile, and alas! withal,
So deeply sunk in misery's thrall;
God has been good to thee, but man
On all has thrown his baneful ban,
Priestcraft, misrule, and faction's strife,
Have drained the fountain of thy life;
And, like some wretch about to drown,
The longer, still the deeper down.

Such were my thoughts in that man-gin
Of N——, called the "Shakspere Inn,"
'Twas night's unloveliest hour—the dead,
I just had snugly got to bed;
The fire was burning dim and low,
And shadows flitted to and fro,
Old N——'s close companion—rain,
Loud rattled on the trembling pane,
The leaden god a moment shed
His balmy influence o'er my head

A moment, and his reign was o'er;
And when my optics sought the floor,
With angry look, and haughty air,
The ghost of Avon's bard stood there.
Preserve 's! had scarcely from me broke,
When thus th' indignant phantom spoke:—

"Since e'er my life's last scene was played,
And in the dust the Actor laid,
Of all the portraits that have been
O'er tavern, or in printshop seen,
This may be safely said to be
The most consummate mockery;
Why, we would think that Mr Quaff
Designed to make the tombstones laugh;
What has such place, such child as he,
At all to do with mine or me?
As much as bear at Almack's ball,
Or donkey in a bishop's stall.

"By great Apollo's crown of light!
By all that aids the poet's flight,—
By every joy that genius knows,—
By all her pangs, by all her woes,—
If ever you expect to claim
One breathing from the trump of Fame,
Ne'er turn your back upon this town,
Till once you've pulled that sign-board down.

Let him get up some such like thing
As Pat, with grunter in a string,
A wolf, a fox, or if he will
Disport it classically still,
The jolly Bacchus, or his friend
Silenus, best would suit his end."
Good, good, said I, but save the mark,
What would you think, Sir, of—a shark?
Before the words their wings had known,
The cock was heard, the spectre gone.

October 1847.

EPISTLE TO MR JOHN STIRLING, DARVEL.

The dreary hills in snow were clad;
Cold, dull, and owrie, to his shed
The redbreast, household bird had fled;
And gloamin' grey
Walked the wide world with silent tread,
To close of day.

Through my dim cabin window, I
Surveyed the vast concave on high,
The cheerless, frowning, winter sky,
And coming night;
While days of youth, long gone, passed by
Before my sight.

O, what is in the hours so sweet,
Loosed from Time's fiery chariot fleet,
And banished to the dark retreat
Of things forgot,
That Fancy loves, yet weeps to meet
Their joys remote.

Whene'er I think on "auld langsyne,"
When days, devoid of care, were mine;
And life's gay morning sun would shine
In cloudless sky;
I linger on the theme divine,
With tearful eye.

But to return; when night displaced
The day, descending down in haste,
And every ray of light had chased
Beyond the girth
That bounds the unfathomable waist
Of mother earth—

I sought the Muse—I sought in vain;
She turned her back with proud disdain;
And, though repulsed, to seek again
I still returned;
While she as oft my courtship plain
Indignant spurned.

For oft she is, to say the least,
As lazy as a village priest,
When after fuddle or a feast,
On snowy morn,
He hears in bed the bell request
His trusty horn.

When thunders roll—when tempests sweep
The hoary surface of the deep,

And heaven's capacious eyelids weep
Their watery store,
Till down the mountain torrents leap,
With thundering roar.

Then—then she furious mounts her car,
And joins the elemental war;
Rides the swift blast; and sees afar
The maddening wave
Rise, and the shipwrecked shivering tar,
Imperious crave.

Again she'll wing her wayward flight;
To ruined turret's mouldering height;
And, with a frenzied wild delight,
There sit alone,
And hear the doleful birds of night
Terrific moan.

Or mark the moon glide slowly through
Her path of deep, dark, cloudless blue;
While suns and systems round pursue
Their courses meet,
And the cold moonlight world in dew
Is slumbering sweet.

And oft on rocks' rude summit grey
She'll stand, as westward wheels the day,
And eye round islet, creek, and bay,
Old ocean's god

Roll, with a wide, resistless sway,
His purple flood.

To Satire's summit too—you know—
The meddling imp will sometimes go;
And on the folks that walk below,
And pass quite civil,
Her bombs and brickbats down she'll throw,
And play the devil.

But if I give her aught to sing
She'll instantaneous droop the wing,
And runs perverse her giddy ring,
Which makes me marvel;
But some time yet the freakish thing
May think on Darvel.

Now, fareweel, Johnny; strive to steer
Of vice's various whirlpools clear;
And may thou still be found to bear,
A Hampden spirit;
Nor e'er rate mankind by their gear,
But by their merit!

ST. ANDREW'S MESSAGE TO THE SCOTSMEN IN LIVERPOOL.

The star-studded pinions of night waved their last,
And the day of St. Andrew was joined to the past;
When sleep had resumed o'er my eyelids its sway,
And unconscious the soul of her burden of clay—
Methought through the far fields of light's sunny blue,
On a chariot of beams of the morning I flew;
And the sound of earth's cities and ocean had died,
Like the voice of a song on the aërial tide.

Again, I beheld, and earth's cities were gone—
Of her domes, and her temples, and towers there were none;
Not one lofty mountain had ventured to bear
Its crest of lone pride in the empire of air;
And far, far away, like the bright star of e'en,
The sun-gilded breast of the ocean was seen.

Again, I beheld, and lo! distance had thrown
Her pall over all that on earth I had known;
And o'er sun, and o'er moon, and the bright milky way
I passed, 'neath the beams of a ne'er setting day;
Till that city celestial, of gems and of gold,
That St. John first beheld in a vision of old,

In splendour o'erwhelming burst full on my view;
The portals revolved, and methought I passed through,
And stood on the shore of the great crystal sea,
And heard of the ransomed the sweet melody.

There, entranced as I listened, and dazzled beheld,
A form slow approached that in beauty excelled,
All lovely as Mercy and Truth, when they bear
Their boon to the deathbed of Guilt and Despair.

And he smiled as he gently on mine laid his hand,
Saying, "Listen young bard, and my words understand;
"By grace, here, through great tribulation I came;
"The patron of Scotland, St. Andrew my name;
"While on earth I through faith communed daily with God,
"And the sweet paths of virtue and wisdom I trode;
"And sowed thus the seed that a harvest has given
"Of fruit everlasting—the bounty of heaven;
"And hence, 'mong the great and the mighty, my name—
"Is blazoned in light by the finger of Fame.

"Thy countrymen long have the day of my birth
"Distinguished and welcomed with gladness and mirth;
"But lately on banks of the Mersey I've seen
"What if honour designed me, no honour has been.
"When the deep bowl is drained until Reason's watch-light
"Is extinguished—and desperate and dark to the fight,

" Unmarshalled, the armies of Passion arise,
" And love drops a tear, and sweet Harmony flies ;
" And man's guardian angels recoil from the sight,
" While fiends on dark errands look on with delight :
" Such scenes may give joy to the base god of wine,
" And add to his honours, but never to mine.

" Go, bard of the Irwine, and ere thou again
" Shalt mark that fair stream mix its waves with the main,
" To men of the north who sojourn in this land,
" Disclose thou my counsel, and this my command :—

" When Time's hoary pinions again bring the day
" That closes November's cloud-mantled array,
" And far from the face of each well-cherished scene,
" The children of dear Caledonia convene ;
" Let Temperance and Wisdom preside at their boards,
" Love rule all their actions, and dictate their words ;
" And thus by kind heaven shall their efforts be blest,
" And with joy shall I hear in those mansions of rest."
I awoke all bewildered—long musing I lay,
And eyed the dawn roll its deep shadows away ;
My trust is discharged to the Saint—and to you,
Ye Scotsmen, that dwell by the Mersey—adieu !

Liverpool, *Dec.*, 1842.

EPISTLE TO MR CHARLES CLARK, COTTAGE-HILL, LANARK.

AUTHOR OF "THE SPINNING WHEEL," ETC.

What, in the name of all divine,
Apollo, and the glorious nine,
Parnassus' mount, Castalia's stream,
And all the ancient classic dream,
Has ta'en the bard of Cottage-hill,
And set a silence on his quill?

Is he away with fate and chance
To pay his court to Queen Romance,
On some fantastic, witching theme,
Involved in everlasting dream,
Peopling the tower, all rent and grey,
That threatening hangs on steep and brae,
And linking every hill and dale
With some event of stirring tale?
Or, has old Isaac Walton's art
Assumed the empire of his heart;
That, spite of years, amphibious grown,
He's only to the Naiads known?

By fancy's power, I've sometimes seen
The aged bard with pensive mien,
By some tall rock upon the side
Of winding Mouss, or dashing Clyde,
Courting the ardent, holy power
Of poesy at evening's hour,
While hung the mist upon the vale,
And told the thrush his amorous tale,
And high o'er-head, in crevice wild,
On scanty soil, the primrose smiled,
As heaven-taught virtue fair to see,
Victorious o'er adversity.

The dream would change, when far and wide,
The snow appeared on every side;
And winter sang in leafless bower
His triumph over plant and flower;
And round thy cot all sadly dumb,
The feathered pensioners would come.*

When loneliness her couch hath spread
Upon the mountain's barren head,
When howls the tempest o'er the heath,
And the deep vale is dark as death,
Nor sound comes from its bosom lone,
But the spent torrent's bubbling moan,

* My friend is very attentive to the wants of the winged tribe during the severities of winter. I have been much amused, on a frosty morning, to see them hopping about the windows with wistful and expectant looks.

The bird steals heartless to its cave,
Like disappointment to the grave;
While weary limbs must still be strained,
Before a resting-place is gained.

When doomed to prove such dreary scene,
My thoughts of thee have often been—
Thy cheering hearth, thy partner kind,
Like halo burst upon my mind,
And might have oft been heard to say,
With a deep sigh, "All far away!"

Our lots as wide asunder lie,
As points opposed of sea and sky;
Thou with a competency blest,
Hast found a fairy place of rest,
As gentle cares, and pastimes hale,
Lead thee serene through age's vale.

Whilst I—but let me not repine,
Nor yet unmanly plaint be mine;
I've suffered much, can suffer more,
One happy thought, 'twill soon be o'er;
When likely none shall lift my name
But for the purpose to defame;
At least, of this I've had my share,
Through the past lease of life to bear;
With vices blamed, with frailties too,
God wot, my nature never knew,

And even of which (but who can tell)
I deem my soul incapable.

Should some dark hour the tidings bring,
That I, poor isolated thing,
By death have lost thy friendship's stay,
My harp shall wake its saddest lay;
The Past forsake her shadowy throne
To bid me strike a deeper tone,
And generous Nature, weeping tell,
The heart is cold that loved her well.

GLASGOW, *April* 1845.

HUGHIE SPIERS, OR THE WONDER OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

Ye sons of song, awake! arise!
Each power invoke in earth and skies;
Tune well your harps;—hark! hark! Fame cries,
"A bard appears!
"Give place! he comes to take the prize;
"My Hughie Spiers!"

Awake! awake! or soon ye'll mourn
Your fame eclipsed—your laurels torn—
Your palms away in triumph borne;
While, 'mid the cheers
Of thousands, with "exalted horn,"
Rides Hughie Spiers!

Bard of the wild Green Island!* thou
Hast got a match—a rival now;
Campbell lags on Parnassus' brow,
His hopes turned fears;

* Moore.

While stumping ower ilk height and howe
Gangs Hughie Spiers!

Auld England talks wi' timorous cheep
O' Shakspere wild, and Milton deep;
Greece 'bout her Homer daurna peep;—
Were they his peers?
Not fit the Pegasus to keep
O' Hughie Spiers!

In Keats' and Shelly's gaudy ware,
The "Foambell" Bard need shine nae mair,
Thence dream o' cake and pudding fair,
In sad arrears.
I doubt, *jackdaws* will fin' their share
Wi' Hughie Spiers!

Nae mair Apollo will give heed
To Scott, the bard of knight and steed,
Or bid the bauld Bob Southey speed;
But laughs and jeers
At every sinner o' the breed,
Save Hughie Spiers!

Venus ance tauld the god, of late
She heard some mortal had him beat;
Urged him to tell, until he flate,
And said, in tears,
"Ye wanton jade! since ye maun hae't,
"It 's Hughie Spiers!"

Ae night he got upon the spree,
And roaring like the northern sea,
He sought Fate Atropos; said he,
Unless your shears
Can send relief, disgraced I'll be,
By Hughie Spiers!

His name on every zephyr scuds;
'Tis heard in wilds and loneliest wuds;—
Sweet Irvine—gentlest of our floods!
Fast onward bears,
To tell the ocean's guardian gods
O' Hughie Spiers!

Thou moon! meek mistress of the night!
Ye stars, that roll in radiance bright!
Ye comets, whose revolving flight
Takes up whole years!
Rejoice in our poetic light—
Bright Hughie Spiers!

Sound him, thou sea! like thunder's roar
Lift thy deep voice along the shore;
The same let all on earth encore!
Meanwhile, ye spheres!
As through the realms of space ye soar,
Sing Hughie Spiers!

Dogs, when they see him, wag their tails;
'Tis said whole packs forget the trails,

Nor aught the huntsman's voice avails;
And, when he nears
Steam carriages, they gar the rails,
Shriek Hughie Spiers!

The flies that round his bardship bum,
His wondrous merits daily hum;
Auld puss, at "twa threads an' a thrum,"
Her windpipe clears,
And bids the chorus rolling come
In Hughie Spiers!

When meditation leads his shanks
By sedgy pools and reedy stanks,
The paddocks lea' their plays and pranks,
And e'en their dears,
And come in crowds to gie their thanks
To Hughie Spiers!

When tempests sweep the welkin wide,
And hags the broomstick steed bestride,
Ere forth upon their route they ride,
Nick cries, my fiers,
Look out, no tricks may ill betide,
Sweet Hughie Spiers!

At birth of this seraphic bard,
Things strange, they say, were seen and heard:
The sun rose east—grass decked the sward—
In gossips' ears

Doors on their oilless hinges jarred,
"O! Hughie Spiers!"

To aid his observations sly,
Nature has given a searching eye;
Although his foes will this deny,
And say he wears
That of the mole, 'tis all a lie—
Gleg Hughie Spiers!

He has gi'en vice ane unco clip,
He made Miss Folly naked strip,
Fast held her in his mighty grip—
And Reason swears
She mended 'neath the sounding whip
O' Hughie Spiers!

Unlike some bards of modern time,
Who string their neighbours' faults in rhyme,
He soars amid the true sublime,
Nor ever veers
To aught that's low; 'twere darkest crime,
Says Hughie Spiers!

Whene'er his mighty numbers flow,
Concord and strength attending go,
Grace, ease, and dignity, in Co.,
Jove, stooping, hears
The notes, and shouts—"Well done! bravo!
"My Hughie Spiers!

Come, Scotia! lift thy drooping head,
And leave poor Burns's lowly bed;
In thy best tartans be thou clad;
Dry up thy tears;
Shout! there's a brighter in his stead,
Great Hughie Spiers!

THE TOMBS OF THE DOUGLASES.

"Sae mony, sae guid, as o' the Douglases hae been
O' ane sirname, were ne'er in Scotland seen."
OLD SAYING.

I.

APPROACH thou reverently, the mighty dead
Are here, whose swords were in themselves a host;
Who in the cause of sacred freedom bled,
And left their names on history's page embossed,
E'en when they fell, 'twas glorious as on coast
Of Eastern land deseends the orb of day;
They conquered perishing; yea, onee when lost
His followers seemed, and dead the Douglas lay,
The dread, redoubted name, was victor in the fray.*

II.

'Tis said, here rests the dust of "Good Sir James,"
If in thy heart there lingers aught that's base,
One thought that with the kindred craven elaims,
Hence! bring not here thy sacrilegious gaze;

* Battle of Otterburne, fought 21st July, 1388.

His virtues far transcend the loftiest praise,
To Southron yoke he never deigned to yield;
The land's first ornament in peaceful days,
War's hottest thunderbolt in battle-field,
In dark, in dangerous times, poor Caledonia's shield.

III.

And Beauty, haughty, high-born Beauty, here
Disclaims the boasted triumph of her eyes;
Lo! in that tomb, where carvings quaint appear,
Perhaps the theme of ancient minstrel lies—
The pride of courts, who gave the envied prize
To valour's hand, and led the radiant dance
With steps of harmony, in all the dyes
That form the rainbow's dazzling expanse—
Her frown more dreaded far than sternest foeman's lance.

IV.

O! for one hour of midnight's deepest noon,
When twinkling orbs their solemn vigils keep;
And mourns the watch-dog to the waning moon;
And weary winds through rents of ruin creep;
And mellowed comes the music of the deep,
Disturbed at times by owlet's dreary scream—
Here left to thought sublime, unseen to weep
O'er human grandeur's sublunary dream,
And gather lore to guide rapt Passion's wayward team.

Douglas, *June*, 1840.

ON THE DEATH OF MR HUGH ADAM.

Fair morn awakes, and from the opening sky
The vanquished shadows of the dawning fly;
She comes, new-born! and from her purple wings
A thousand beauties o'er the welkin flings;
She comes!—proud perched among his listening dames
Shrill through the sleepy town the cock proclaims;
With waning splendour sinks the morning-star,
The watch-dog's voice howls mournful from afar,
The zephyr sullen sighs above the dead,
As o'er the churchyard pensively I tread.

O Time! what changes wait on every wave,
As roll thy billows to their boundless grave!
Things of a day, we deck thy destined shore;
Thou mov'st—we perish—and are seen no more;

Sometime the tenant of yon humble sod
Youth's flowery vales and sunny mountains trod;
Enchanting Hope her prospects spread around,
Wide as the deep in sky-formed circle bound;

Bright as the beam that lights the Christian's eye,
About in triumph of his faith to die;
But all is fled, like phantom of a dream,
Or midnight meteor's transitory gleam.

Cold is that breast where Independence dwelt
Where Reason ruled, and conquered Passion knelt,
Where love to mankind reigned without control,
And every noble feeling of the soul.
And closed in death, and dim as sister clay,
The eye that beamed with friendship's purest ray;
Silent the tongue whence sweet instruction flowed,
Or harmless mirth, as duty marked the road.

No more we'll meet around the evening blaze,
When withering winter leads the stormy maze,
Chills the bleak wilds, and o'er the mountains white
Drops with a frown the dark and lonesome night!
There search some page of modern work sublime,
Or records rescued from the wrecks of time;
And bid, before the intellectual eye,
The men, the things of other days, pass by;
Or Vice behold portrayed in picture true,
Stript of her charms, and naked to the view;
Produce, for general weal, whate'er of lore
The closing week had added to our store;
Bid all our sparks in one combustion glow,
And in one stream our little streamlets flow;
While in each breast Joy waked her transports wild,
And Virtue silent o'er the circle smiled;

The hours that ushered Sabbath's solemn day,
With pleasure winged, fled unperceived away.

No more when mists the twilight world invest,
And Ocean's sounds rise gently in the west,
We'll seek the fields, and on some spot reclined,
Where round the wild flowers wanton in the wind,
In converse sweet indulge, or raptured trace
The wondrous charms of Nature's fairy face.
No more with weary feet we'll scour the plain,
The forest green, the margin of the main:
No more indulge the soul-inspiring view
From old Dundonald's shaggy hills of blue.
No more shall study find thee in her bower,
Pale o'er the taper of the midnight hour,
Far on the cliffs where Learning's blossoms blow,
Whence looks the world contemptible below.
But O, how passing sad to wander o'er
The dear, dear past, and add to all—no more!
The bliss recalled from which we ever part,
Falls with a signal sorrow on the heart.

And thee I mourn in vain, whom fell decay
Snatched, ere meridian hour of life, away;
In minds of friends and relatives shall long
Live, when forgotten is my humble song.

And when life's fitful taper has expired,
Its last faint flickerings from this scene retired,
To meet in new existence be it ours,
Nearer to God, with more exalted powers!

A FRAGMENT.

'Twas April—bright and genial was the day,
Young dazzling clouds on azure pillows lay
Along the margin of the ethereal plain,
Like sea birds sleeping on the summer main;
The infant primrose reared its dewy head
With modest beauty from the mossy bed;
Not far removed, on springlet's margin green,
The eldest daisy of the year was seen;
Buds the mild breeze with balmy odours blest,
And bright wings twittered round the half-formed nest.
The burn, from Winter's iron bondage free,
Leaped, laughed, and sang to join the mighty Dee,
That down impetuous from the mountains rolled,
And his wild strength in haughty murmurs told;
For Spring had called, and Nature heard her voice,
And bade all subjects of her realms rejoice.

Where Cairnsmuir lifts its hoary head on high,
Oft crowned with snow beneath the summer sky,
And ofttimes halts the General of the storm,*
The dreadful phalanx of his strength to form;

* "When Cairnsmuir gets on his hat.
Criffle he soon will hear of that."
Old Proverb.

Ere fiery messengers have given the host
Command to scour the Gallovidian coast;
I passed, a pilgrim to that sacred height*
Whence Lowe's rapt spirit plumed her wings for flight,
To soar with Fancy through her boundless sway,
And earn a crown impervious to decay.

And when meridian beams began to fail,
And lengthening shadows intersect the vale,
Embossed in sterile hills of darkest hue,
The loch of Kenmure burst upon the view,
A giant gem, by Nature rudely set,
When all her hostile energies were met.

New Galloway, *April*, 1842.

* Airds, parish of Kells, stewartry of Kirkcudbright, sometime the residence of Lowe, author of "Mary's Dream."

WRITTEN IN WHALLEY ABBEY, LANCASHIRE.

O'ER the wide ocean of departed Time,
Imagination takes her lonesome flight,
And lo! the past in majesty sublime
Appears, arrayed in hues of life and light.
'Tis vesper hour, and wold, and woodland height,
And shadowy hills are waxing dimly grey;
The convent gathers to the solemn rite—
Beneath the lofty roof they bend, they pray—
Now, hark! the music swells, now softly dies away.

Of ghostly fathers, what a goodly band!
Some forms to fasting little are allied;
And some the learned, the pious of the land,
Some that have stemmed the battle's stormy tide,
Some look with less of piety than pride;
Some gallants, too, despite their locks of snow,
For whatsoe'er we choose to be our guide,
Whatever gilding o'er ourselves we throw,
'Tis human nature, oft unchanged, that lies below.

But who is she beside yon marble tomb
That kneels, a study for the sculptor's art?
Though but in opening of her beauty's bloom,
Grief bade the splendours of the rose depart.
Her laden eye tells anguish of the heart,
That well of soul of azure's purest hue,
Like violet in wilderness apart,
The harebell filled with morning's mountain dew,
Or summer's cloudless sky, o'er ocean's boundless view.

The lady weeps; a ringlet o'er her brow
Falls like a sunbeam through an April shower;
And, lo! a lovely boy is with her now,
Her only child:—a chief of rival power
Slew her loved lord, and fired his stately tower,
His lands laid waste, his vassals forced to flee,
And unattended in the midnight hour,
Save by the light that made her homeless—she,
With infant in her arms, fled to the sanctuary.

And mark that worn, attenuated fair,
Glide like the mist of eve along the vale:
And now she stands, the statue of Despair;
And now a smile lights up her visage pale.
Her knight was brave as ever girded mail,
But fell at last beneath the Turkish brand.
She loves the place of graves when night winds wail,
Raves of a cloven crest, and bloody hand,
And bones all bleached and bare, on desert's burning sand.

And, hark! a clash of arms and trampling steeds,
For know a warlike chieftain comes to-day
To yield the Church his gold, and tell his beads,
So that to-morrow he may burn and slay.
The spell is broke;—behold the swallows play
Through yawning arches; on the mouldering stone
The wild flower hangs; the ivy finds its way
O'er columns fallen, and battlements o'erthrown;
And all is sadly grand, and all is Ruin's own.

June 1843.

THE WANDERING PIPER.

This is of strange phenomena the age,
Of hope-destroying Whigs, and watchful Tories,
Of banded sweeping Radicals, that wage
War with both church and state, and which a bore is
From front to rear, they tell us; while from cage
Of royalty, to flutter in the glories
Of petticoats imperial, new made
Peers and knights fly, like midges on parade;—

But, 'tis beyond all note and comprehension,
Clubs, dinners, working-men's associations,
Bills of coercion, schemes of church-extension,
Chaps that indulge in pleasing speculations,
Of man's perfectibility, suspension,
Railways, balls, banquets, duels, agitations,
The church, the charter, and repeal—it licks ought
Ere madman dreamed—John Bull has turned Don Quixote.

Old Caledonia's rampant for her "Kirk"—
At least, so I've been given to understand—
The subject seems to me a little *mirk;*
In things divine I'm but a sorry hand;
Howe'er, I hope she'll never draw her dirk,
Or seek the hills again, with book and brand;
And being church-building 'mong a starving people,
Will give each house a bread and butter steeple.

"Man in the moon" is getting something old;
"The wandering Jew" has pitched his tent with Death;
Joanna Southcote, too, has caught a cold
(Poor body) which has ta'en away her breath;
And by the sons of scepticism we're told,
Lost half his terrors even the Devil hath;
And as the world's wild fancy is grown riper,
What has she got now?—Oh! "a wandering Piper!"

Of whom the trump of Fame has sounded loud,
That talismanic touchstone. In all ages
To which the common sense of man has bowed,
In stamping kings, priests, heroes, saints, and sages,
Who are but pipers all, although allowed
Of higher character in history's pages.
'Tis true, they differ something in their keys,
As also in the mode they manage fees;

Besides, they sometimes with their piping mix
A little of the homicide and juggler;

At other times, again they play such tricks
As savour of the liar, bandit, smuggler.
It seems the world must yield her tale of bricks
Without straw, still to fascinate and boggle her
Have something, and appears, for ought yet shown,
Just made for kings and clergymen alone.

This man of mystery—but who is he?
Numbers pretend the secret to impart,
Yet know no more than preachers what we'll be,
When fails to flow the fountain of the heart:
Some luminary fallen, he looks to me,
Of gaming-table, or the sporting mart—
A class that Ruin's comet seldom fails to
Treat as the insects cattle with their tails do.

But soft, I think I've heard some people say,
'Tis quite the same whatever the attraction,
Providing you are pleased in your own way,
Or can attain a certain satisfaction;
Life is, even at its longest summer day,
As we all know, a business-like transaction;
But while it lasts, alike are blest to tarry on—
The bees their flowers, the beetles on their carrion.

EPISTLE TO MRS HAMILTON OF PARKHILL.

Madam,—I have received your note,
Besides my scroll of ragged coat;
And, 'tis enough for all I've wrote,
To know that one
Enlightened mind has pleasure got
From aught I've done.

If e'er in print I try my gear,
Among the very first ye'll hear;
And for the part, I learn, ye'll bear
At that sad crisis,
I send to you my thanks sincere,
And warmest wishes.

But, as the Ephesian town-clerk said,
"Let us do nothing rash," for aid
Old Time shall bring; and Fate has played
A trick as queer,
As call me from the workshop's shade
And discords drear.

Perhaps my lot she yet may lay
Beneath the glorious blaze of day,
Where wood, and vale, and mountain grey,
Are spread around;
And rocks that roll the deep away
With voice profound.

Then far as Nature's wide expanse
Exceeds a workshop's stinted glance;
And far as Nature's notes advance
Above the din
That wounds and stupifies the sense,
Our cells within!

As far my song shall then transcend,
That which now labours through my hand!
Converse with Nature will extend
My strength and skill,
And point the steps by which t' ascend
The sacred hill.

Meantime, in life's steep rugged road,
Obscure, unknown, I graveward plod,
Cheered on beneath the present load
By Hope's faint light,
Which often has deceitful glowed,
To set in night.

Hark! hark! I hear the critic corps
Behind, with loud invidious roar;

And, lo! Oblivion's gulf, before,
Is yawning wide;
The bard's launch'd in—nor rises more
Above the tide.

But, hold! my wild imagination!
I see, Ma'am, you've got information
That I, since at your habitation,
To Hymen's altar
Have paid the usual visitation,
And got his halter!

Yes! lang Jock danced about the light,
Rejoicing in its radiance bright,
With frolicsome, incautious flight,
Nor feared the gin,
Till, like some insect of the night,
He tumbled in.

Mony a weary mile he trottit,
O'er mony a stane and hillock stottit,
Or wet to skin, wi' dirt bespottit,
Or laired in snaw;
The very next night he forgot it,
And scoured awa.

But aft he viewed, with rapture high,
The silent, starry, moonlight sky,
And earth asleep beneath it lie;
While on the gale

Arose the river's mighty sigh,
Far down the dale.

And aft the houlet, flichtering hame
Through the still morn, cried out—"Fie shame!"
The very collies did exclaim!
And even the craik
Would rant, till rocks returned the same,
"Ye rake! ye rake!"

But now the chiel maun toil and sweat,
'Neath scorching sun, or tempests' beat,
Nor e'er approach the muse's seat,
For's very nose;
Or get a curtain lecture by 't,
And lumpless brose.

But hush, my harp! May peace be still
Within the mansion of Parkhill;
May ye your course with joy fulfil
And then arise,
Triumphant o'er this world of ill,
Beyond the skies.

This leaves us both, and our relations,
In health, and at our occupations;
And while my heart-strings their vibrations
And tone maintain,
Your much obliged, through all mutations,
Ma'am, I remain.

ON VISITING LANERCOST PRIORY, AND NAWORTH CASTLE.*

My homely harp, though locks are turning grey,
Slower the step, and shrunken is the limb—
Though spirits have forgot their wonted play,
And faded sight tells distant objects dim—

* Lanercost Priory is situated about eleven miles N.E. of Carlisle, in the beautiful vale called St Mary's Holm, on the banks of the river Irthing. It is built in the usual cruciform ; the style is what is termed the early English. The nave has been fitted up as a parish church ; and in the eastern part of the building, which is in a ruinous state, the tombs of several distinguished persons may be seen. It was founded A. D. 1116, by Robert de Vaux, the second Baron of Gilsland, to atone for the murder of Gilles Fil Bueth, whom he treacherously slew at a conference held for the adjustment of their respective claims to the property. Fil Bueth was the rightful Baron of Gilsland, the lands having been alienated at the Norman Conquest. So lax were the laws at that period, especially when the Church had been propitiated, that De Vaux not only escaped public justice, but was afterwards appointed a judge of assize by Henry II. It was noted that he died childless, and the estate passed to another family.

Naworth Castle is situated in the parish of Brampton, about a mile S.W. of Lanercost Priory. It is the baronial residence of the lords of Gilsland, and a seat of the Earl of Carlisle. Naworth was built by Ralph, Lord Dacre, about the year 1335, and has much to render it an object of interest, particularly its having been the residence of the illustrious Lord William Howard, generally denominated " Belted Will."

Though *poortith* flings o'er all its sadd'ning sway,
And friends are few, while, through the prospect grim,
I'm left alone, lost kindred to bewail,
On confines dark of age's dreary vale.

Awhile forgetful, on this mouldering stone,
Shaped by some hand whose history is lost,
Again I'll wake thy melancholy tone
On Irthing's banks, in dale of Lanercost.
Here Superstition reared her Stygian throne,
And shackled thought, aye, heaven's own purpose crossed—
Extinguished Truth's fair light—led man astray—
His life, his soul, and substance made a prey.

And yet thou, Lanercost, demand'st a tear;
Here lie the good, the beautiful, the brave;
Their gorgeous monuments, defaced, appear
Unwise attempts to triumph o'er the grave.
E'en the big rain-drops speak in sadness here,
And moaning winds, that through the long weeds rave,
A something to the pensive mind unfold
That may be felt, but never can be told.

And Naworth, relic of the olden day,
(By fools and fanatics misnamed "the good,")
The suns of centuries have passed away,
And left thine ancient strength still unsubdued.
How sweet along thy galleries to stray,
And, in their deep and solemn solitude,

Behold, with mixture of delight and dread,
The forms and features of th' illustrious dead.

But there is one o'er all the rest we scan,
  Nursed in the lap of stern adversity,
Whose lofty presence gives at once the man,
  The scholar, hero, and the patriot, he.
Nor less his fame for milder virtues ran—
  Domestic love and passing courtesy;
O'er Naworth seems thy spirit lingering still,
First of a noble line, immortal "Belted Will."

November 18, 1850.

ON THE DEATH OF MR GEORGE OSBORNE.

The storm o'erhangs the barren hill,
And cold winds sweep the moorlands bleak,
While Nature stands with tresses torn,
And tears congealed upon her cheek;
And lifts the wood its lonesome voice,
Nor seen is living creature, save
The dismal owl, while sad and slow
I follow Irvine's winding wave.

Again, again, another tie,
That bound me to the vision vain
Of life, and every phantom joy,
Is all untimely snapt in twain;
A light, that o'er my weary path
Has often shed a cheering ray,
Till brighter prospects rose around,
Is set, alas! and set for aye.

That deep, dark eye, so rich in soul;
Oh, is its magic ever gone?

How in the social hour it glowed,
How o'er the page of genius shone.
And is that heart now still and cold
In the dark kingdom of Decay,
Once open as the breath of morn,
And generous as the dews of May;

Yes, gone to join the things that were,
Which but at Memory's lofty call,
In holy garbs of vanished days,
Arise in her aërial hall.
Lo, they advance, and numbers there,
That once with me life's pathway trode,
Pass, and, with sad and warning air,
Point to the church-yard's pregnant sod!

The hedgerow bank, and mossy brae,
Remains the same as when we prest
Their verdant sides, and sought the flower,
Or treasure of the wild bee's nest.
The hoary trunk of ancient tree,
Still stands conspicuous in the wood,
Where first, with fluttering hearts, we viewed
The little songster's tender brood.

Sweet scene of many an hour of bliss,
The tiny brook, the wimpling burn,
Their waters still flow on the same,
Their banks the same at every turn.

Still as eternal seems the cliff,
As when the ivy first we drew
From its proud base, or gathered there
The ring-dove's feathers wet with dew.

But now upon the blighted heart,
Their varied charms are faintly traced,
Like sunbeam of a wintry dawn
Upon the dreary moorland waste.
With never, never ceasing speed
We travel to some unknown shore,
And all the dear delightful dreams
Of early days return no more.

Again, again, another tie,
That bound me to the vision vain
Of life, and every phantom joy,
Is all untimely snapt in twain;
A light that o'er my weary path
Has often shed a cheering ray,
Till brighter prospects rose around,
Is set, alas! and set for aye.

EPISTLE TO MR ROBERT BROWN, KIRKHILL, CRAIGIE.

How get ye on, my auld fier "Kirkie?"
Wee, gleg, auld-farrant, cockin' birkie,
Is Fortune's sky grown dim and murky,
Or dazzling bright,
Like sunset on the shores of Turkey,
A sea of light?

Does e'er the Muse now come to see you,
And climb the hill of Barnweil wi' you,
And there sic lifts, sic visions gi'e you,
That things of Time
And sense for ever seem to lea' you,
In thoughts sublime?

Or has she on you turned her back,
And doomed you to a catch-the-plack,
To tread the sordid gin-horse track
Down to the grave;
When o'er your head Oblivion black
Shall roll her wave?

But, "Kirkie," auld enough's your horn,
To ken the Muses saw nae corn,
Nor spin a thread that can be worn
To face the cauld,
And lea' their votaries aft forlorn,
When frail and auld.

Na; for sic things they never care,
But croon and canter here and there,
Nor teach for a' their heathenish lear,
A bairn its carritch,
Nor e'er o' saut ae spoonfu' spare
To mak' the parritch.

Nae wonder, then, ere life's short day
Has measured half its joyless way,
Bards o'er some precipice should gae,
Wi' a' their bays,
And furnish mony a tale o' wae
To after days.

Should e'er I see Apollo's face,
I'll tell 'im, if he disna place
His household gear in tense and case,
He's nae grammarian:
Why lag behind this railroad race,
Utilitarian?

He must get hands, nor frail, nor few,
To spin, weave, cook, distil, and brew,

And mony a snob, and hosier too,
And tailor wight;
Besides, a mint, the hale year through
Gaun day and night.

Nae mair the bardies then should thole
Reproach and want, frae pole to pole,
Sklent leuks, and tongue's contemptuous roll,
Frae gets o' Folly,
Wha ne'er were blessed wi' half the soul
O' shepherd's colly.

Ho! steersman Reason—look afore!
I hear the breaker's hungry roar,
Yet on we scud, as Wilson's corps
O' beagles speed,
Harlin' their red-het harrows o'er
Some wretch's head.

Then (I suppose) we'll shorten sail,
Talk wiser, though perhaps more stale,
Spier gin ye're aye at meal-time hale,
And douce, and steady,
Or joined hae to your title's tail
The term—grand-daddy.

But, if the Fates so kind should be,
Or causes and effects agree,
Or means and ends each other see,
On fittin' friendly,

Or what else name Divinity
Shall deem mair kindly

To gie' the jilts, howe'er, should they
Gang linkin' down the wished-for way,
My wandering bardship hopes to hae
The pleasure soon,
Your hand to shake, some market day,
In Killie toun.

Meanwhile, 'tis time to trace a land,
Where wide tracks scorn the tiller's hand;
Yet in my heart's hall Rapture's brand
Will kindle bright
At gloamin', as I take my stand
On some lone height.

And see afar the barren waste,
The tarn, the mountain russet-drest,
The forest groaning in the blast,
The sea-fowls soar,
The whelming wave, with snowy crest,
Assault the shore.

But hark! one—two: guid morn, my frien',
May ne'er ye see what I hae seen,—
Grim Ruin face to face, and keen
Detraction's blade,
Drawn first by those that should have been
The first to shade.

Domestic peace and comfort fly,
Hope gone, no friend beneath the sky,
The arm unstrung, the dark'ning eye,
And half-scared brain,
And even the desperate wish to die,
But wished in vain.

Eneugh, and mair : be sure that ye
To Mrs Brown remember me;
And to the lyric Elder, he
"O' Barnweil brae,"
So guid society that see
For ance I may.

WIGTOWN, *January*, 1842.

HANNAH HEDGEHOG.

O love-destroying, cursed Bigotry!
POLLOK.

HERE Hannah Hedgehog's won to rest,
A guid and godly dame,
Although her word maun be the test
To this superior claim.

She practised aye the moral law
Wi' firm determination,
When it would wi' her interest draw.
Or wi' her inclination.

But itherwise, to loup the dyke,
Atweel, she wasna laith;
Wha needs wi' morals mak' a fyke.
That "soun' is in the faith."

Twa facts she constantly could see
As clear as noonday light—
To wit, her neighbour aye aglee,
Hersel' for ever right.

Wha squared not wi' her "question beuk,"
Was in a "sad condition;"
And, oh! wi' what complacent leuk
She sent them to perdition!

Wi' bible like a kitchen hearth,
She duly took her place
In meeting-house, nor kent the dearth
O' sighin' and grimace;

But parish kirk—e'er she'd gane there
She'd of her head been shorn;
For know she was that jewel rare—
An Antiburgher born!

And kent by lug-mark every ane
Upon whose lot was poured,
For his or predecessor's sin,
The judgments o' the Lord.

But a' that unto her befell,
"By Providence was sent,"
"A father's care and love to tell,"
"A healin' chastisement."

And aften she was heard to say,
That a' the true elect
Were just hersel', and twa three mae,
That formed her favoured sect;

That a' the human race beside
  Were given to seduction
O' Satan, that God glorified
  Might be in their destruction!

And this, she said, was "tidings glad,"
  A message from above
Of mercy, from that Being shed.
  That goodness is and love!

Yet some wild wag says, it shall be
  Through life his fervent prayer,
Should heaven consist of such as she,
  That he may ne'er be there.

LINES TO MY ELDEST SON.

The Passions, reckless of command,
As steed that spurns the desert's sand,
And bounds away in Freedom's bliss,
Proud tenant of the wilderness;
May Heaven forbid that thou should'st own,
With all their pangs that I have known.
The eye to see Truth's happy way,
With heart still prone to turn astray,
And seek, perverse, the winding path
That leads to shame, destruction, death.
Taught from my earliest hours, to prove
A parent's most indulgent love;
And blest in manhood's dawn a while
With Fortune's fair but treacherous smile;
Then sent upon the world adrift,
Of each, at once, of all bereft;
And doomed to meet the gorgon stare
Of the grim demon of Despair.
But, if proud Passion's wildest wave,
Thy tranquil breast should never lave;
And all my weary wanderings past,
And gained the bed of lasting rest;

While Sabbath's deep bell flings around
Its thought-awakening, solemn sound,
And thou hast left the crowd to pay
One tribute to parental clay;
If, on the path of Time gone by,
My erring steps should meet thine eye,
O, let not then one thought severe
A moment check the rising tear!
The whirlwind, and the zephyr bland,
Fulfil alike the great command.

LINES TO LAVINIA.

There comes an hour, Lavinia, when we must
Bid all farewell, and sink into the dust:
There comes a sun, that shall behold us laid
Beneath the turf, forgotten and decayed;
There comes a morning, at whose vernal voice
Earth shall revive, and nature shall rejoice,
But see us sleeping in the dewy sod,
And all unconscious as the kindred clod.
There comes a day, diffusing life and light,
With all that summer gives of warm and bright,
And as away its beams of sunshine pass,
They'll shade us deeper in the long green grass.
There comes a day when autumn shall descend,
Dispensing blessings with an open hand;
And o'er these fertile vales, youths yet unborn
Shall wield the sickle in the waving corn;
Join in the jests and simple pranks, that goad
The hours along—and lighten labour's load:
And when the dews of evening deck the blade,
And the lone redbreast tops the mellow shade,
In love's embrace they'll hail the twilight scene,
Even in retreats where thou and I have been;

While we, to love and all things else unknown,
Mix our cold dust with generations gone.
There comes a day, whose dull and dreary close
Shall see the world a cheerless waste of snows,
Whose farewell beam and setting crimson streak,
Purpling yon mountain's far ascending peak,
Shall view the mantle of grim winter spread
Even o'er the stones that mark our narrow bed;
But these will pass, and ages will roll on,
And we remain unconscious they have flown.
Then comes a day, when dark shall grow the sky,
The sun in mid-course, close his dying eye,
The sea stand still, deep smitten with dismay,
And every isle and mountain flee away;
Then shall our mortal put the immortal on,
And meet ETERNAL JUSTICE on his throne.

THE DOG AND THE COCK—(NOT A FABLE).

Within the shelter of a rising wood,
Fast by a brook, a homely cottage stood;
And well the songsters in the bowers repaid
The crumbs that kindness 'mong the snow had laid.
Beside each window grew a rose-tree tall,
And clumps of daffodil against the wall;
Intruding sunbeams shewed the husband's chair,
And puss was dozing comfortably there.

And neighbouring also was a little mill,
Turned by the brawling torrent of the hill;
And down the scanty, rough, rock-skirted road,
The whistling peasant drove the heavy load.

Pausing, I searched the storehouse of the brain,
To find some emblems of the rustic twain;
Whilst musing thus, two heralds of the morn,
With bloody crests, and snowy plumage torn,
I marked at distance, on a verdant height,
Engaged in doubtful, but determined fight;
But, scarce had time to note the hostile pair,
When a poor sheep-dog, with an anxious air,

Between them rushed, and gently down the hill
His master's drove, until he reached the mill;
Then, with reproof on his sagacious face,
Compelled the culprit to his roosting-place.

Who studies well the brutal kind,
In some the qualities will find,
Which he, whatever his estate,
Would oft do well to imitate;
And many more of equal worth,
Kindness and culture would bring forth,
That latent are through life, or die,
Or by neglect or cruelty.

CARSPHAIRN, *May* 1842.

ON SEEING A REDBREAST SHOT.

All ruddy glowed the darkening west,
In azure were the mountains drest,
Her veil of mist had evening cast
O'er all the plain,
And slowly home the reapers passed,
A weary train.

On old Dundonald's hills I lay,
And watched the landscape fade away;
The owl come from the turret grey,
And skim the dell,
While leaves from autumn's sapless spray
Down rustling fell.

While on a thorn that widely spread
Its moss-grown lowly bending head,
Where long the winter's storm had shed
Its baneful power,
And oft returning summer clad
In leaf and flower;

A redbreast sang of sunshine gone,
And dreary winter coming on:
What though his strains had never known
The rules of art,
They woke to notes of sweetest tone,
The trembling heart.

Bade days return that far had fled,
And hopes long laid among the dead,
And forms in fairy colours clad,
Confused appear;
While melting Feeling kindly shed
Her warmest tear.

When, lo! a flash, a thundering knell,
That startled Echo in her cell,
At once dissolved the pleasing spell,
And hushed the song;
The little warbler lifeless fell
The leaves among.

Thus the young bard, in some retreat
Remote from Learning's lofty seat,
The critic, prowling, haps to meet,
And strikes the blow,
That lays him, with his prospects sweet
For ever low.

HELP'S ELEGY.

What's this that's happened on the knowe?
Vexed is ilk heart—fashed ilka pow,
An' down the big saut, saut tears row,
Like laumer bead;
Lass! Mary, sabbin', tauld me how
That Help was dead!

Even she, that made the bargain sad
Of bucklin' wi' the rhymster lad,
Wha has, O sirs! turned out sae bad
In point o' creed,
Forgot it a' when heard she had
That Help was dead!

The auld gudewife cam' to the town,
(And, shame to tell, in tartan gown),
She brought the news made Bessie soun'
Her plaintive reed;
And aye the chorus o' the tune
Was, Help is dead!

I heard her brither say of late,
Whene'er he saw the parritch plate,

It brought poor Help's untimely fate
Into his head;
The scartins gang anither gate
Sin' Help is dead.

But what think ye, the sinner would
The corpse commit unto the flood,
And bid it to the ocean scud,
The fish to feed?
But mair respect the auld folk had
For Help that's dead.

The auld gudeman (sad sight to see)
His grave dug deep beneath a tree,
And laid him in, and cannily
He clapt his head;
The robins there sing mournfully
Ower Help, that's dead.

Nae mair, when gloamin' cluds the plain,
And wooers come, he'll rack his chain,
And scauld them sair, or mak' a mane
At midnight dread;
The trees sough ower his dwelling lane—
Puir Help is dead.

At times when Fortune set him free,
He was inclined a sheep to pree,
But just that single faut had he
O' glaiket greed;

Maist folk an' dogs hae twa or three;
Heeh! Help is dead!

Lately, as day began to fail,
I heard a sad and solemn tale,
Sung by twa maidens at the pail,
In tartan weed;
And ower their notes would this prevail,
O, Help is dead!

They sang his coat was bonny brown;
His paws were sleekit, white, and soun';
His voice sae strong, it rang aroun',
Through grove and mead;
The brawest dog e'er Death laid down,
Was Help, that's dead.

They sang his toils and troubles past,
The deeds that spoke his wisdom vast,
And gied their claes, while tears fell fast,
The tither screed;
Then raise, deep, wild as winter's blast,
An' Help is dead.

But, O, dear sirs! what's this that's wrang?
I fin' my Muse has lost the fang—
She says, nae farther wi' her sang
She can proceed,
But bids you keep in memory lang
Puir Help that's dead.

ARRAN, FROM THE SEA.

As quits some soul her tenement of clay,
Behind yon hills retires the orb of day;
Yon gloomy hills, in awful grandeur piled,
Which mock the storm that revels o'er the wild;
Yon hills, that burst from earth's eternal hold,
When dire convulsions shook the world of old.
Wake, Contemplation! 'tis thy favoured hour:
The time to prove thy salutary power;
The huge grey cliffs suspended inseeure—
The peaceful dwellings of the mountain boor—
The deep, dark vales—the torrent's rugged way—
The forests tall, that skirt the winding bay—
Rise on the sight, and captivate the eye;
Woods, rocks, hills, streams, in grand confusion lie;
How great the power, how potent the decree
That formed the whole with only—"LET THERE BE!"

FRAGMENT.

There's something awful in the midnight hour,
When, starting sudden from a transient sleep,
We see the moonbeams in a silvery shower
Fall on our chamber floor, and dark, and deep
The shadows of the distant mountains lower,
And hear the moaning night-wind's sullen sweep,
And see the trees around like spectres stand,
And this when far from friends and Fatherland.

Then seem the forms that gladdened life's young day
Around our couch to come with smiles of love,
And eyes all-eloquent, albeit that they
Have long, long ceased with living things to move.
But stern Remembrance wings her envious way
Through Reason's circuit, and, like Noah's dove,
Returns, unwelcome tidings to declare,
That these are dreams as false as they are fair.

Kirkcudbright, *March*, 1842.

ON VISITING THE GRAVE OF HARDIE AND BAIRD, IN STIRLING CHURCHYARD.

Away ! ye streams that wind in sullen pride,
Or dash impetuous down the mountain's side ;
Ye fragrant groves that shade the rifted steep,
And wave your tops like dimples of the deep ;
Ye glittering villas, whence the noonday light
Returns in beams insufferably bright ;
Ye ramparts rude that on the cliffs have hung,
When yon far hills, and even time was young ;
Yon far, far hills that skirt the welkin round,
Where slumber morning's lazy mists profound ;
Where Freedom had of old her sacred home,
And bade defiance to the hosts of Rome ;
Whate'er can yield the glowing heart delight,
Or burst in glory on the ravished sight.
Away, away ! and let Destruction fling
Her bolts of vengeance from the whirlwind's wing ;
The heavens be dark as demon of Despair,
And deeply furrowed by the lightning's glare ;
Ye giant thunders in your strength awake,
Till earth astonished to her centre shake ;
And let the spirits from the realms of light,
That stood of old for Caledonia's right,
Descend indignant, and, in name of heaven,
Ask, where's the boon their victories have given ?
My soul should have a scene congenial then,
To weep—to ponder o'er these murdered men.

ON BEING OVERTAKEN BY A STORM.

The rack flies like troops from the lost battle-plain,
And dark round the shore heaves the wide troubled
main;
The seabirds seek land with an ominous wail,
And grey oaks of ages are bent in the gale.

Night comes, doubly mantled in darkness and dread,
The herd and the flock unto shelter have fled,
The hind, looking round him, hies hastily on,
And leaves me the prey of the tempest alone.

In yon dreary valley, dim seen through the gloom,
The tall rock that stands o'er the warrior's tomb,
Might seem of some spectre the gaunt grisly form,
Or demon appointed to lead on the storm.

What voice in my ear rung? it follows me still,
When o'er the past grieving, or threatened with ill,
It comes from the dear dead, and solemn its tone,
"Our counsels you scorned, and must reap as you've
sown."

YORKSHIRE, *March*, 1847.

ON MEETING A PYTHAGOREAN ON BOSWORTH FIELD.

I.

From Lei'ster town, one sweltry summer day,
I made a pilgrimage to Bosworth Field,
And there turned Mistress Fancy out to play,
And, sooth, some strange illusions she did yield :—
Around me seemed to roll the mortal fray,
The victors triumphed, and the vanquished reeled ;
And Richard cried, with stentrophonic force,
"A horse, a horse! my kingdom for a horse!"

II.

But no horse came, nor even an honest cow,
A thing most shocking, and, indeed, a shame ;
At last a *sheep* appeared, and on its brow
A single horn, the creature, too, was lame ;
A dog pursued it, with its loud bow-wow,
And eke young Hodge, and antiquated dame,
When off the martial phantoms flew, pellmell,
And lo! I stood beside "King Richard's Well."*

* There is a small spring on Bosworth Field, known by the name of "King Richard's Well," at which the tyrant is said to have quenched his thirst during the battle. It is covered with a column

III.

Three large, black frogs were sitting on the brink,
A fourth, of stunted growth, and hunchbacked too;
The first leaped in as fast as you could wink,
And gave their heels most cleverly to view;
I'm spinning yarn, Sir Reader, you may think,
Things less entitled to the term of true
Have drawn the sword, made cripples fight with crutches,
Cost kings their crowns, and grandmothers their *nutches*.*

IV.

The small, bumped gentleman still kept his place,
With two most wicked, serpent-looking eyes
He stared defiance, and though in his face
I shook my stick, he still refused to rise;
A rustic passing, tickled with the case,
Said, grinning, "whoy, it would not un zooprize,
"If it sud be King Dick, the blūdy dog,
"Performin' penance now in that 'ere frog."

of rubble-stone, containing a tablet with the following inscription, from the pen of the late Dr Parr :—

Aqva . Ex . Hoc . Pvteo . Havsta .
Sitim . Sedavit .
Ricardvs . Tertivs . Rex . Angliæ .
Cvm . Henrico . Comete . De Richmondia .
Acerime . Atqve . Inferissime . Prælians .
Et . Vita . Pariter . ac . sceptro .
Ante . Noctem . Caritvrvs .
2 Kal. Sept. A.D. 1485.

* Caps.

A SKETCH.

Fair falls the cold and ineffectual beam
On frozen path, and ice-encrusted stream,
The chimney's fumes in lengthened lines ascend,
And from the eaves long icicles depend,
While sonorous bells bid ambient ether call
To distant echo in her woodland hall;
With motives various as the garbs they wear,
To church the lieges orderly repair,
Many their light religion there to find,
Again to leave it with the church behind.

One of that class behold amid the throng,
That steps with some slight consequence along;
Pale is his face, the prominences bold,
And badly formed to stand the piercing cold;
Blank and unmeaning, to the world displayed,
In all the pomp of vacancy arrayed.

The church is gained—the text is read—he winks,
Nods, till in sleep contentedly he sinks,
Or with a stupid, rude, and wandering gaze,
The place, the preacher, and the crowd surveys.

When sermon 's o'er, elate he homeward hies,
As much improved, as penitent, as wise
As when he came ; nor sentence can he tell
More than he could at ringing of the bell.
" Fine man ! fine man ! sound doctrine ! " he will say,
As great achievement, mark the text he may,
And though he own the creed and Christian name,
'Tis but because his fathers did the same ;
And had his lot been cast in eastern clime,
Where Ganges pours his sacred tide sublime,
To that dread deity had learned to kneel,
Or dragged the idol's murdering chariot-wheel.
Mere child of form ! yet steadily inclined
To that which dawned upon his youthful mind ;
Sordid of soul, of spirit mean and poor,
To pride or power a stepping-stone secure.

O, how unlike of old the warrior wight,
Who pricked his thundering charger to the fight,
Whirled the bright brand, and dealt the deadly blow,
That told like lightning on the blasted foe ;
And bade the waters of the mountain flood,
Sweep to the vale the fierce invader's blood !
My fancy soars—I see his stately form,
Firm as the oak, that mocks the winter's storm ;
Fire in his eye, and valour in his arm,
A soul alive to Freedom's every charm :
Mark, with a free-born air he bears his head,
The mist-clad mountain sounding to his tread.

Such were thy sons, dear Caledonia! thine
The guards of Freedom at her lofty shrine
In ancient days, for life nor death would yield
One foot of Right's invaluable field;
But fled upon the wings of Time, again
We seek for such, but seek the land in vain.

WRITTEN AT "THE BONNY BUSH ABOON TRAQUAIR."

Stern winter's voice is on the hill,
And summer's glory swells the wave
Of troubled Tweed, and loud, and chill
The gusts through "birks" of Yarrow rave,
Her "braes" in mourning weeds are clad
For children of the sunshine—dead.

A weary, pensive, and alone,
Like tree upon the trackless waste;
Or storm-beat solitary stone,
That points to where the mighty rest—
I stand beneath thy branches bare,
Thou "bonny bush aboon Traquair."

Song-sainted relic of the past,
How many hearths have heard thy name?

How many hearts whose lots were cast
In foreign lands, with holy flame
Have burned, while rose their native air,
The "bonny bush aboon Traquair?"

Years come like e'ening on the dell,
And gone are Yarrow's bards of yore;
And Tweed, and Ettrick, weeping tell,
That Scott and Hogg are now no more;
And something says, again, I ne'er
Shall see the "bush aboon Traquair."

TRAQUAIR. *November*, 1840.

LINES WRITTEN NEAR KILMARNOCK HOUSE.

YON aged beech, all crimsoned with the ray
Of weary light that forms the winter day,
Calls to remembrance, with a pleasing pain,
The days I never shall behold again;
And joys that seem by memory displayed,
To veil the present with a denser shade.
While Nature stands in a dejected state,
And on the sun eve shuts the western gate,
I'll pause alone! and drop a tribute tear
O'er what is now, and what has once been here.

Within that ancient but neglected place,
When life was sweet, there dwelt another race;
But all has long since passed the silent shore
Of the dark ocean of the world no more;
No trace is left, no vestige can be found,
Nor of themselves, nor household gods around.
'Tis but in Fancy's shadowy dream appears
The watch-dog, terror of my younger years;
The hoary hind, that travelled daily all
These mansions round, at duty's various call;
The well-remembered cattle, that would wait,
And *low*, impatient for the opening gate;
The roofless houses, where I climbed in quest
Of the small treasures of the songster's nest;
The garden, sleeping in the morning dew,
With its rich fruits, and flowers of every hue;
And charms, which vainly words attempt to trace.
That hung in storm and sunshine round the place
All that once awed or made my young heart gay,
Change has removed, and Time has swept away.

WRITTEN AT THE GRAVE OF ROBIN HOOD.

How seemly sleeps the forest king
  Beneath the greenwood's spreading bough,
Where round the merry minstrels sing,
  And fresh and free the breezes blow;
And dark yews shade, with sombre grace,
The noble hunter's resting-place!
Long sacred may thine ashes be,
England's first archer, bold, and free;
Thy times were dark, but yet the fire,
Imparted by our common Sire,
Burned brightly in thy manly breast,
Despite the tyrant's stern behest;
The churchman's wile, the despot's chain,
For thee were forged alike in vain;
Blythe dancing 'neath the greenwood tree,
Thy partner—glorious liberty!

When sceptred wretches are no more,
When priestcraft's iron age is o'er,
When conquerors have found their right
Legitimate, the land of night;

When marts where life's resistless wave
Now swells, are voiceless as the grave,
And forests rise where cities stood,
In song shall live "bold Robin Hood."

KIRKLEES, YORKSHIRE, *Sept.* 1843.

ON BEING ASKED WHAT FIGURE WAS MOST DESCRIPTIVE OF A POET.

WHEN long, long shadows of the midnight fall
From the rent towers of yonder ruined wall,
And the bright sentinels of heaven are seen,
Each in his post, around their peerless queen;
The winds are pillowed on the mountain's breast,
And woods and waters are in waveless rest;
Hast thou not seen the meteor on its way,
Diffusing round a secondary day?
But scarce upon the eye its beams had shone,
When the fair phantom was for ever gone.

MIDNIGHT THOUGHTS.

The wind howls eerie in yon darksome wood,
The rain descends in torrents on the wold,
And, through the vast unbounded solitude,
Far, far away the thunderbolt is rolled!
Both in one cell of Death's obdurate hold
Moulder the forms from whom I drew my birth—
Could we the grave's dark covering unfold,
How changed are they since round the blazing hearth,
In industry engaged, or in the hour of mirth!

And 'tis but as a dream that they have been,
Remembrance wonders if the tale be true;
They were, and passed away like sunbeams sheen,
Pursued by evening o'er the mountains blue:
Around me spring a race that soon shall view,
Through the dim medium of reflected Time,
My fleet existence; neath the vernal dew,
The summer's sunshine, and the storm sublime,
Shall soon, forgotten, sleep the wayward son of rhyme.

A FRAGMENT.

When Spring to earth has paid her grateful vow,
And hung her chaplet on the mountain's brow,
'Tis sweet to mark the opening bud, the stream
Dissolved, run glittering in the noontide beam,
To list the wintry silence of the grove,
Broke by the notes of melody and love.

'Tis sweet in drowsy summer morn to rest
Far from the world, on some wild mountain's breast,
On whose primeval turf, the flowery band,
Untrained, untrodden, in their beauty stand;
The daisy in its gems celestial set,
Forget-me-not, and scented violet,
The blooming furze, the birch, and yellow broom,
On either side diffuse a rich perfume;
Like honours upon age, the mountain rose,
And balmy woodbine in their wreaths enclose—
The moss-grown branches of the patriarch thorn—
All twinkling beauteous with the tears of morn,
And clumps of fern, and clustering foxglove wave
Their locks luxuriant o'er the warrior's grave.

There, stretched at ease, the subject plain survey,
Its rural charms and city far away;

Where sleeps the dust of those that once could claim
Of all on earth, our kindest, softest name.
The graves that now the only home appear
That stern adversity has left us here.
Where the last heart that loved us has been laid,
The dear, dear hands our tottering steps that stayed,
The lips that often kissed us while we slept,
The eyes that watch o'er all our troubles kept,
Saw, through affection's tears, our early ways,
The tongue that taught us first our Maker's praise.

And, O how sweet, when in her heavenly vest
Of stainless snow, is slumbering Nature drest,
And all is hushed, at twilight's solemn hour,
High on the turrets of some mouldering tower,
To mark the red round sun of winter sink
Far on the Ocean's melancholy brink,
There to indulge in meditation deep,
Till raptured Feeling bids us fondly weep!

ON VISITING THE LAKE OF WINDERMERE.

When Sabbath's holy calm was breathing round.
And every spot seemed consecrated ground;
And the young thoughts were robed in colours bright,
Fresh from the Fountain of all life and light,
I've laid my head upon my mother's knee,
And wondering, listened eagerly, while she
Discoursed of that far world, beyond the sway
Of the dire ills that vex life's fleeting day;
While infant fancy dazzling pictures drew,
For ever beautiful, and ever new;
And oft, when dreaming of that land of bliss,
Methinks I've imaged such a scene as this.

Bowness, *August* 1843.

WRITTEN IN MELROSE ABBEY.

Bright as the beams of everlasting day,
On sapphire palaces of heaven that play;
Or tide eternal of effulgence rolled
On crystal battlements, and streets of gold;
And gem-built cities of celestial dyes,
But to be looked on by immortal eyes;
Unnumbered images at once appear,
Yet find no breath, no language, but a tear.

October, 1840.

A SUMMER EVENING.

Beyond the abyss that leads its hoary files
Of warrior waves round Albion's many isles,
The day went down, and evening o'er the dale
Shed her soft tears, and spread her silver veil;
The noisy village, by the sheltering hill,
Was hushed to rest, and all was sweetly still,
Save where the blackbird, in the darkening brake,
An anthem warbled for his partner's sake;
Or rustling pinions and discordant sound
Of watchful lapwing wavering around;
Or faint, far off, the river's rapid sweep,
Fast journeying on to join the mighty deep;
The dark blue mountains to the west were seen,
And seemed as penciled on the sky serene;
Around whose tops were hung in bright array
The robes that decked the orb of parting day;
All had conspired to fill the pensive breast
With things too great, too sweet to be expressed.

WRITTEN AT MY FATHER'S GRAVE.

Descending suns, or seasons on the wane,
The silent city, the deserted fane,
The forest's fallen monarch, or the mouldering tower,
Hold o'er the heart unutterable power;

But faint the effect, and feeble is the sway,
To what we feel beside the unconscious clay
Of those with whom we've run the race of life,
Shared in its joys, or struggled in its strife;
Now gone for ever from this world of care—
For ever gone—alas! we know not where.
But higher far arise our feelings must,
When pondering o'er a loving parent's dust.
Sustain awhile frail nature—O, my God!
Else bursts my heart, I sink beneath the rod.

A WINTER'S EVENING.

Like dying saint's was seen the sun's last smile,
O'er the blue waves that roll around our isle;
I wandered forth, keen swept the rising breeze
O'er the bare fields, and through the leafless trees;
The distant hills in desolation's dress,
Told to the plains a tale of deep distress;
And oft, between, the blasts were heard afar
The mingling sounds of elemental war.
As on I passed, day gently sunk to rest,
Far in the lowering chambers of the west;
No warbling songster gave a kind adieu,
As round the weary shades of evening drew;
But sadness settled in her gloomy reign,
O'er the dark deep and o'er the barren plain;
The twilight failed; and waxing in her might,
Fell o'er the fields the joyless winter night.

A FRAGMENT.

When flowers, dew-burdened, hang the weary head,
And morning's mists are on the mountains spread;
When smoky pillars, curl on curl, arise
From cottage chimneys, towering to the skies;
When rooks slow journeying through the morning air,
To fields afar in sable crowds repair;
And through the silent morn, far, far away,
Harsh clattering wheels the heavy loads betray;
Then let me linger where I've plucked the flower,
Or chased the bee in childhood's sunny hour;
Recount its pleasures past, its joys decayed,
And mourn the change that ruthless Time has made.

WRITTEN IN DUMFRIES CHURCHYARD.

Oblivion! all unconquerable power!
Vain our attempts to shun thy dreaded hour;
The time must come, when e'en the earth we tread
Shall form a part unknown in ocean's bed.

WRITTEN UNDER THE IMPRESSION OF MELANCHOLY.

As rolls the sun his deep red setting beams
On some dark mountain, till on fire it seems;
So backward shine the dear departed rays
Of childhood gone, on these dim evil days;
Still, as through life's lone journey I proceed,
Cares crowd on cares, and toils to toils succeed;
But why repine or shudder at the gloom?
Soon I shall rest within the silent tomb.

WRITTEN ON A VIEW OF CAIRNTABLE.

Like yon high hill my bypast life has been—
Wide tracks of shade, and sunny spots between;
And like yon hill's far stretching solitude,
Alas! but barren of all real good;
Life's noon is wasted, and age comes amain,
Like night on traveller of the desert plain.
Oh, grant, kind heaven, that I may, undismayed,
Approach death's deep impenetrable shade.

Muirkirk, *May* 1840.

TO ROBERT ROSE, Esq.,

"The Bard of Colour,"

ON HEARING THAT HE WAS ENGAGED IN A POEM ON THE OCEAN, AND FREQUENTLY SPENT THE NIGHT IN STUDY, AND THE DAY IN THE ARMS OF SOMNUS.

The god of the ocean, one bright summer day,
Reposed on a rock in a sweet little bay,
A beautiful sea-nymph was placed by his side—
The crown of his kingdom, his glory, and pride.
With aspect benignant, said Neptune, "My dear,
"The news of our latest gazette did you hear?
"That Rose, 'bard of colour,' is chanting a strain,
"The subject no less than our mighty domain?"

"I did," said the beauty, "and heard with surprise,
"Aware that in slumber still sealed are his eyes,
"Till the flock seeks the fold, and the bright stars arise."

"By Styx then," cried Neptune, "'twill all end in smoke,
"As sure as the walls of old England are oak;
"All nature renounces the bard that would scorn
"The charms of the beautiful goddess of morn."

The maid of the deep, " Sire, with you I agree ;
" But what a strange species of plant he must be !
" I've heard much of *roses*, but never of one
" Would keep its leaves shut in the face of the sun !"

THE SUNFLOWER AND PINK.

The morn was June's, and passing fair,
I walked along a gay parterre,
Where flowers of every scent and hue
Arranged in tasteful order grew ;
A limpid streamlet sung its song
The bright inhabitants among,
Diffusing round its genial powers,
Like Truth on childhood's golden hours.

By sunflower just begun to feast
On grateful bounties of the east,
Methought I heard this speech addressed
To pink of gaily mottled breast—

" Sweet little friend, here all but you
" Are graced with coronet of dew,
" Which gilded by my patron's dyes,
" The haughtiest monarch's crown outvies ;

" Pray how is this? since dewdrops fall
" As showers and light alike on all."
The pink replied, and as it said,
Appeared to take a deeper red—
" Dear neighbour, since you condescend
" To ask for me by name of friend,
" The cause I'll tell of this my lot,
" Though, sooth to say, would rather not;
" While yet the morning's eye was grey,
" The beauteous Harriet came this way,
" Whether 'twas love denied her rest,
" Or that devotion warmed her breast,
" I know not, but as here she stood
" All statue-like in musing mood,
" Her pretty foot beneath my stem
" She placed, I stooped to kiss the gem,
" *And thus I lost my diadem.*"

TO THE HAREBELL.

Nature's sweetest, loveliest child,
Tenant of the trackless wild,
Or in some sequestered lane
Leading to the ruined fane;
Or in holy garland now
Wreathed around that ruin's brow;
Or on mossy bank or brae,
Where the living waters play;
Or on breezy mountain's breast,
By the foot of wild deer prest;
Or by cairn or Druid's stone,
Telling tales of days long gone,
Nodding o'er the moorland stream,
Pure as childhood's holiest dream;
Or in unfrequented wood,
'Neath the old oak's solitude,
Where unseen the cushat dear
Pours her plaint in morning's ear;
Where the thrush his vigil keeps,
Warbling till the twilight weeps;

Or beside the martyr's grave,
Where the purple heath-bells wave,
And 'tis said that strains are sung
Sometimes by immortal tongue.

I've met thee in the south and north,—
By Tweed and Yarrow, Tay and Forth,
By Dee, by Don, on banks of Spey,
In merry England's valleys gay,
On Cambria's cliffs, and mountains hoar,
Sweet Mona's Isle, green Erin's shore,—
Wherever seen thou could'st impart
A glimpse of sunshine to the heart,
And in a single glance would'st speak
What words to tell were all too weak.

Sweet gem! I've loved thee from the hour
That taught me first to prize a flower;
O! in that vision may'st thou be
The last of this fair earth I see;
And often on my lowly grave
In fragrant winds of autumn wave,
And there may oft the redbreast stay
To celebrate the dirge of day;
And friendship sometimes through the tear
Behold the sainted past appear,
And glean a thought from death to guide
The barque of life through time's rough tide.

THE FLOWERS OF THE FOREST.

[In the summer of 1836, Mr J. Inglis (brother to the Rev. Mr Inglis of Craigie, Ayrshire), an amiable young man, and one of the best amateur singers in Edinburgh, was killed by a fall from a drosky. The "Flowers of the Forest" was his favourite song, which he sang with great pathos and effect. His remains were interred in the cemetery of the West Church, contiguous to the Castle Rock. As the body was being lowered into the grave, the band stationed in the Castle accidentally struck up the "Flowers of the Forest," which created a deep sensation among the funeral party. The following verses were written on hearing of this singular coincidence.]

Perchance the spirit, lingering nigh
To bid its fellow-dust farewell,
Had woke with mystic sympathy
The strain—how fit a funeral knell
For one who sung so sweet that lay,
Himself untimely "wede away!"

Yes, there were in that mournful band,
Nor few, that oft had felt the power,
The magic, of that music bland,
That sweetly stole the social hour,
Who wept, as closed the dull cold clay
O'er him untimely "wede away."

And there was one by stronger ties
Affectioned, and whose every sense
The tide of feeling in its rise
Suspended, as it rushed intense:
So deep the tribute good men pay
To kindred spirits "wede away."

The strain how grateful, yea, how dear,
That gives us back our early days,
Sublimed through many a parted year,
All dazzling in immortal rays!
But doubly thus, should memory say,
It speaks of loved ones "wede away."

Methinks I see in foreign land,
Far from Edina's "honoured shade,"
Some friend by woodland pensive stand,
While, mellowed through the twilight glade,
Come those dear notes, in happier day
He heard from thee, long "wede away."

And oft, dear youth, when friends are met,
And mirth and music float around,
As cloud on some green sunny plat,
Shall silence spread her spell profound,
When thou, within the circle gay,
Art named untimely, "wede away."

A WAYSIDE GLEANING.

The moonlight is sleeping on Severn's wide vale,
And waters to midnight are whisp'ring their tale;
And shades from yon ruin fall dark o'er the scene,
Like thoughts from the proud heart that broken has
been.

With slow step of sorrow, and head on her breast,
Like some guilty thing which in death cannot rest,
That form still is keeping a watch on the lea,
O'er the pathway that leads to the old "trysting tree."

'Tis Ellen, once fair as the glad streak of blue
That first, the dark frown of the tempest, breaks
through;
The fell blight of falsehood has fallen on her bloom,
That aching head early shall sink in the tomb.

Worcestershire, 1846.

ON VISITING ONE OF THE ROUND TOWERS OF IRELAND.

As some lone rock upon the ocean's side,
O'er which in vain long swept the angry tide,
Upon the present still thou stand'st sublime,
A stately triumph o'er the tide of Time;
The hands that reared thee, and the head that planned,
The lord that owned thee, and the strength that manned,
The eyes that from thee watched the shining spheres,
Sleep in the shadow of a thousand years;
And mind of thy dark history in quest,
Returns but like the dove, that found no rest;
This simple lesson teaching, vainly we
From aught on earth seek immortality.

ANTRIM, 19*th August*, 1847.

WRITTEN AT THE GRAVE OF THE AUTHOR OF "THE COURSE OF TIME."

How bright, yet sadly brief was thy career,
Too pure an essence of the fire divine,
To yield thy light on earth's unhallowed sphere,
Till the cold verge of age's dull decline;
Truth and her ardent sister Genius, here
With gentle Piety shall oft combine,
Drop the warm tear, and sit with sorrow dumb,
Till Time shall cease the fleeting hours to sum.

MILLBROOK, HAMPSHIRE, *Nov.*. 1846.

WRITTEN DURING ILLNESS.

Now life's lamp is burning too feebly to last,
While cruel remembrance o'erturns all the past,
But care, disappointment, and sorrow, and pain,
No vapour, no shadow, more fleeting or vain.

Yet Nature, dear Nature! in my misery
My lorn spirit still has had glad hours with thee;
Thy deep woods, and waters, thy high mountains hoar,
Clear streams, and sweet wild-flowers, shall I see no more?

DUNDEE, *August*, 1849.

EPITAPH FOR C**RL*S L*CK***T.

Under this lightning-blasted sod,
Falsehood, Deceit, and Malice lie;
Behold, ye saints, and bless your God,
Millenium times are surely nigh!

EPITAPH FOR MR R****T C*******D.

Whoe'er thou art that hither turns an eye,
Where the cold ashes of a mortal lie;
If in the headlong chace of wordly gain,
To pause a moment may not be in vain.
He that beneath is still and silent now,
Was once as ardent in pursuit as thou,
And, as a man contending in a race
Flings all aside that may impede his pace;
So every nobler quality of mind
As Feeling, Principle, he left behind,
Gained his wished aim, and from the strife retired,
To nurse the gold, *when God his soul required.*

ON SOME ILL-BRED AGRICULTURAL APPRENTICES.

Whate'er his pupils Brown has taught
Of ploughing, sowing, feeding;
'Tis plain, some little hints he ought
To give them yet, on—Breeding!

But O! may graeious heaven his skill
From such a task exempt aye,
Namely, attempting *that* to fill
Which nature has made—Empty.

ON MR J. INCH COMPLAINING OF THE SMALL SIZE OF MY VOLUME.

My book, the grasp of such a man,
For quantity might pinch;
I'm sure it is at least a span,
And thou art but an *Inch*.

SATAN'S REJECTED.

Long Davie died, and down below
His spirit took the route;
Nick barred the gates, and strange to show,
He shut the lawyer out.

"Such characters I can't admit,"
Said Nick, "'tis very true,
"My corps is bad, but better yet—
"*Than company for you.*"

ON HEARING THAT MR LAMB HAD DECEIVED MR SHEPHERD.

Some say a Lamb is harmless, yet
I have an instance known
Of one that has a *Shepherd* bit—
Aye, bit him to the bone!

ON SEEING THE EFFIGY OF A BIBLE ABOVE A BOOKSELLER'S DOOR.

Sir Mammon's votary o'er his trap
The bible's form has got;
As Satan for his selfish ends
Will sometimes scripture quote.

SINGULAR PHENOMENON ON THE INTERMENT OF AN INSIDIOUS INNKEEPER.

James cleekit in many, and justly the grim
Old Snap with his own snare has cleekit in him;
The sexton declares since he's got him in keep,
His pasture is blighted, and starved are the sheep;
E'en such the effect of his villanous trunk,
The worms in the churchyard are all getting drunk.

EPITAPH FOR J. W., DYER.

Here rests of Johnny White the clay,
  Who long had *dyed* for pelf;
But at command of Fate one day,
  He, *gratis*, *died* himself!

EPITAPH FOR MR JOHN INGRAM, ARTIST.

Beneath this strange turf where the long ragweeds
  tremble,
And ghosts of the churchyard all nightly assemble,
Lie, for ever relieved from each earthly tenter,
The canvass and frame of John Ingram, the painter;
But the lights and the shades that composed the design,
Have long since returned to their Fountain Divine;
By degrees they withdrew, and when death did attend
To blot out the picture—'twas done to his hand.

ON A CARPET FACTORY SUBSCRIPTION BALL.

Old Plato once met Father Jove,
And asked the Self-Existent,
" What was in earth or heaven above
" Of all most inconsistent?"

Jove heard the question, gave a nod,
To heaven's high towers advancing,
Unveiled this world—" Now," says the god,
" D'ye see yon weavers dancing?"

TO A PERSON WITH VERY LARGE FEET.

When Paton came to heaven's gate,
Saint Peter looked quite saucy,
And cried, " Stand back—your feet's so great
Ye'll crack our crystal causeway."

M'Adam passing on survey,
Said, " Pate, my lad, ye're wrang;
Braid wheels but half the duty pay
Where'er they chance to gang."

EPITAPH FOR MR T. GUNN.

An engine this was that much service did once,
Beneath the black banner of King Defamation;
Jack Malice was gunner, its site was the sconce
Of Envy, and played upon fort Reputation.

At length the commander-in-chief, Monsieur Fate,
An order despatched by his aid-de-camp, Time,
To old Sergeant Death, who acting in straight
Accordance with that in the mandate sublime,

Dismounted and spiked the said engine, and lent
The wreck to Sir Grave, till earth's last troops
appear,
When recast it shall be by the Maker, and sent
To the arsenal grand of the first Cannonier.*

* *Vide* Milton.

TO IRVINE WATER.

AIR—"*The Old Head of Dennis.*"

OH! Irvine, dear Irvine, though far, far away,
I see in the sunshine thy glad waters play—
The bird flitting fond round its neat little nest,
The bee buried deep in the wild rose's breast.

And blue bells that waved in the soft summer wind,
Or laden with dew of the morning reclined,
And looked in thy clear deeps, as beauty's bright eyes
Appear in the mirror, when tears round them rise.

When the lamb had lain down, and the lark left the sky,
And dewdrops were kissing the bean-flower's black eye,
And youngsters, released from their toils and the school,
All laughing and shouting, plunged into the pool;
Oh, then it was sweet in thy wide holms to stray,
While music in some distant wood died away!
And listen the voices of joy and of love,
Rise, mingled, the song of thy waters above.

KIDDERMINSTER, WORCESTERSHIRE,
April 1844.

TAMMY M'QUHAE.

AIR—"*The Campbells are comin'.*"

Ye slee Norlan' billies that trudge wi' the pack,
Should steel-vexin' Sheffield e'er come on your track,
And shelter be wantin' at close o' the day,
Be sure that ye spier for ane Tammy M'Quhae.
His sign is the "Auld Cock in Paradise-square,"
And routh o' the comforts o' life ye'll get there;
Prince Albert himsel', "on his wife's washing day,
"Might safely tak' pat-luck wi' Tammy M'Quhae."

He never gets sulky, he never gets dool,
Can crack wi' the wise, and can counsel the fool;
Ye'll travel the length o' a hale simmer day,
Nor meet wi' a landlord like Tammy M'Quhae.
And lang in the square may the "Auld Cock" be seen,
And aye be his cavie baith cozie and bein;
And lang may auld Fate unto Death answer, nay,
When Baneshanks seeks leave to tak' Tammy M'Quhae.

SHEFFIELD, *Nov.* 1843.

JEANIE O' THE FIEL'.

AIR—"*Willie was a wanton wag.*"

SAE lightly fa's my lassie's fit,
That silence owns the sound as kin',
While music says its a' her ain—
And fain they baith the prize would win.

She's pure as pearly draps that fa',
Frae een o' Joy for ithers' weel,
Or harebell on yon castle wa',
My winsome Jeanie o' the Fiel'.

The guileless look, the witching smile,
The gracefu' air unkent to art,
In Jeanie meet, unconscious she
O' a' her power to win the heart.

Wi' smiles upon her sordid band,
Let fortune set her gowden seal,
Gi'e me the heart, gi'e me the hand
O' bonny Jeanie o' the Fiel'.

THE HAPPY FIVE.

SONG, WRITTEN FOR FIVE BACHELORS.

AIR—"*Joseph Tuck, the Tailor's Son.*"

Now, since we've met, let's merry get.
And bid the song arise, Sir;
And, for a while, our cares beguile,
For swift the moment flies, Sir.
Nae wives we dread, our shins to bleed,
Our hair to rug and rive, Sir;
Old Hymen's switch shall never touch
The free—the happy five—Sir.
CHORUS—Fal, lal, lal, &c.

Though fair anes sly the fishing try,
And shining bait prepare, Sir,
We'll lift the hook, and only look
To see what's lurking there, Sir;
To see what can puir simple man
Of happiness deprive, Sir;
But keep aloof, for arrow proof
Are all the happy five, Sir.
Fal, lal, lal, &c.

Auld Adie crouse took up his house,
And Madam square began, Sir;
But soon the jilt his pleasure spilt,
And ruined the honest man, Sir;
And, since his day, nae man, they say,
Can e'er in wedlock thrive, Sir;
But never shall her chains enthral
The free, the happy five, Sir.
Fal, lal, lal, &c.

When summer sweet, wi' flowery feet,
Comes whiddin' o'er the braes, Sir,
To cleed the wood, and deck the sod,
And langer spin the days, Sir;
While married fools tug at the tools,
And toil till scarce alive, Sir,
As unconfined as mountain wind
Shall rove the happy five, Sir.
Fal, lal, lal, &c.

When winter hoar, frae shore to shore,
Spreads out the biting snaw, Sir,
The married men, sae blue and thin,
Can scarce come out ava, Sir;
Alang the ice, wi' caution nice,
The channel-stane we'll drive, Sir,
And nightly sing, till echoes ring,
The sporting, merry five, Sir.
Fal, lal, lal, &c.

Now, let them blow and make a show,
About the married life, Sir;
'Tis, at the best, if right confessed,
But drudgery and strife, Sir.
Let those who may become a prey,
And right to ruin drive, Sir,
We'll sport about, and wag it out,
The free, the happy five, Sir.
Fal, lal, lal, &c.

SANDY THAT WONS IN THE AIRD.

AIR—"*Logie o' Buchan.*"

O! was ye whare Irwine rows roun' the stey brae,
Whare the gowd gowan glints 'neath the snaw-blossomed slae;
And, lo'ed by ilk bodie, frae duke to the caird,
Say, met ye wi' Sandy, that wons in the Aird?
He's nae cantin' loon wi' a bass-fiddle face,
Aye talkin' o' sin, condemnation, an' grace;
But he's what is far better, an' waur can be spared,
He's an honest man, Sandy, that wons in the Aird.

Where a prank's to be played, or a cuff gi'en to care,
Or some doughty deed dune, he is sure to be there;
Yet his rigs are weel till'd, an' fu' bein his stackyard,
Sic a fell chiel is Sandy, that wons in the Aird.

When the wee drap gi'es life to the laugh an' the joke,
He's whiles in a corner enjoyin' his "smoke;"
But mark, when his weapon o' satire is bared,
Few care to meet Sandy, that wons in the Aird.

O! wha owre the lea like the swallow has passed;
Or drift, when 'tis driven by December's bauld blast;
Was e'er horse and rider sae happily paired:
"Creepin' Kate" an' blythe Sandy, that wons in the Aird?
Lang, lang may he wag roun' the tap o' yon brae,
Wi' a pouch never wantin'—a heart never wae;
Mony tears 'll be shed, when, beneath the cauld swaird,
Are the banes laid o' Sandy, that wons in the Aird.

SANDY THE BOOKMAN.

AIR—"*Paudeen o' Raffarty.*"

As passin' a cabin
Where time was prevailin',
With tempest, in quickly
Its "union repalin',"
The darlint young Judy,
"What kased 'im to lave me,
"Dear Sandy the bookman,
"How could he deecave me."

In ould pratee basket
A little black dear sat,
Still munchin' a number
Of "*Bell's Gazeteer*" at,
While Judy kept sobbin'
" What kased 'im to lave me,
" Dear Sandy, the bookman,
" How could he deceave me.

" The Poteen he took whiles,
" And ca'd me a *randy*,
" And blue was his beard,
" Yet a jewil was Sandy;
" But Och! did I think
" That he ever would lave me,
" Dear Sandy, the bookman,
" How could he deceave me.

" Bad luck to ye steamboats!
" St Patrick, may ne'er ane
" Again see the coast of
" Your own blessed Erin;
" For wasn't it them that
" Alone made 'im lave me,
" Dear Sandy, the bookman,
" Ne'er mint to deceave me."

FAREWELL TO CRAUFURDLAND.

Arranged to Music, with accompaniments for the Pianoforte,
By James Ingham, Esq., Lay Vicar of Exeter Cathedral.

Thou dark stream slow wending thy deep rocky way,
By foliage oft hid from the bright eye of day,
I've viewed thee with pleasure, but now must with pain,—
Farewell! for I never may see thee again.

Ye woods whence fond fancy a spirit would bring,
That trimmed the gold pinions of thought's hallowed wing,
Your beauties will gladden some happier swain,
Farewell! for I never may see you again.

O'er moss, and o'er moorland, my path soon shall be,
The cloud-covered mountain, and wide stormy sea;
Your beauties will gladden some happier swain,
Farewell! for I never may see you again.

December 1845.

STANZAS

ADDRESSED TO THE AUTHOR ON HIS VISIT TO EDINBURGH IN 1851.
BY JOHN HARRISON.

Bard of the tuneful lyre we greet thee well;
Edina bids thee welcome to her "shade,"
Where deathless Genius wreaths her mystic spell
Around her favourite sons—the living and the dead—
And, where she decks, within her classic bowers,
Their brows with bays, their tombs with living flowers.

Here, "Wanderer," rest, and let thy woodnotes fling
Their cadence on the fresh'ning breeze of Spring,
For, as the glorious ancient minstrels' strains
Unbend the heart to others joys or pains,
So, Ramsay, thine, with sympathetic glow
Commands the smile to rise, or pitying tear to flow.

Then, hie thee on thy prosperous path to fame,
And bid thy woodnotes ring in every land,
Where vice reigns rampant, raise thy vig'rous hand
With Satire's scorpion-whip, reprove,—reclaim;
But, where on any spot of this green earth,
In cot, or ha', in rags, or silk attire,
You meet the man of modest sterling worth,
The Deity is there!—give honour, and admire!

SONNET

TO THE AUTHOR OF "WOODNOTES OF A WANDERER," &c. &c.
BY JAMES CREASE.*—JUNE 1851.

WANDERER through many lands, thy "woodnotes wild"
Sooth the lorn spirit with resistless power,
And gild the gloom of Sorrow's saddest hour,
Although, from all we love on earth, exiled;—
Hail to thee, Ramsay! may the time to come
Brighten and smile upon thee. May the days
Already past, have borne away the sum
Of all thy griefs; and may thy pleasing lays,
Bright with the undying ray which Genius flings
Around her, meet their due desert, and may
That power from whence our every blessings springs,
Guide and direct thee till life's closing day;
Then, in a higher strain, thy voice shall raise
A rapturous "note" of gratitude and praise.

* Author of "The Child of Poverty," and other Poems.

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

"Shift we the scene from Mr Southey and Switzerland to Mr John Ramsay, weaver, Kilmarnock. How fleet is a glance of the mind!—and if a man is determined to hunt out genius, there is no saying, in these days, where he may be carried. 'Why may not imagination trace the noble dust of Alexander till he finds it stopping a bunghole!' asks Shakspere; and, on the same principle, why may not imagination discover genius in a red night-cap, working at the loom in Kilmarnock? We care not for the outward casket—it is the gem silently glittering within which we prize. Is the dew-drop less beautiful because it happens to fall upon the humblest blade of grass, rather than into the bosom of the full-blown rose? Genius comes like the dew from the starry sky, and dreams not of the conventional distinctions of artificial society. Mr John Ramsay may be a weaver in the sight of man, but he is a poet in the sight of Heaven, and he has his reward in his own breast. We do not mean to say that Mr John Ramsay is another Burns; all we mean is, that he has the gentler susceptibilities of genius about him, and we are therefore glad to have it in our power to give publicity to one of his effusions. It is the latest effort of his muse, although in the present

state of our trade, he writes, 'I must say with Burns—*Sma' heart hae I to sing.*'"—*Edinburgh Literary Journal, or Weekly Register of Criticism and Belles Lettres.*

"'Woodnotes of a Wanderer, by J. Ramsay, Kilmarnock,' is a really spirited and clever volume of poems, written by a self-taught individual."—*Rev. George Gilfillan, in Hogg's Instructor, March.* 1850.

"We concur in the wonder and the praise which Mr Robert Chambers has expressed of the force and eloquence of the expressions which distinguish some of the compositions of the accomplished operative."—*Glasgow Constitutional, March,* 1840.

"The volume presents so many charming pieces, that we are sure all will be delighted with it; and while, to the general reader, its numerous beauties cannot fail to prove highly attractive, to the sons of Ayrshire it will be more peculiarly delightful, as written among scenes which memory loves to haunt, endeared as they are by the recollection of earlier, and perhaps of happier years. We thank John Ramsay, whoever or whatever he may be, for the galaxy he has presented to us; and we take leave of him for the present, by wishing success to his muse, and recommending him to the attention of our readers."—*Glasgow Liberator.*

"The author has evidently read much of the best of poetry, is a keen observer of nature, and possesses considerable originality of thought, a lively vein of humour, and is capable of highly appreciating the ridiculous, and portraying it in a strong light.—*Ayr Advertiser, December,* 1839.

"With his description of the sports of the day, [in 'Eglinton Park Meeting'] he has contrived to weave in descriptions of nature—evincing a taste for the picturesque and sublime—familiar humour is mingled with philosophical reflection—pathos, and the gentle susceptibilities of our nature, with satire and burlesque, political, theological, and local."—*Kilmarnock Journal, November,* 1839.

"The poem ['Dundonald,] is rich in poetical imagery, historical detail, and melting pathos, calculated to win the admiration of all by whom it is perused. Our space will not allow us to notice the minor poems of Mr Ramsay: some of them are of a very superior character, and fully establish his claim to be classed among the poets of Scotland."—*Ayr Observer, December*, 1839.

"The leading poem, 'Eglinton Park Meeting,' is a strong, manly, manners-painting piece, full of humour, pathos, and description, in rapid interchange. The miscellaneous pieces which follow, are all of them equally the productions of a shrewd, vigorous mind."—*Dumfries Herald, April*, 1840.

"We have been favoured with a glance at a splendid poem, entitled 'An Address to Dundonald Castle,' inscribed to the noble proprietor of that very ancient royal residence—by Mr John Ramsay. The intrinsic merits of this production rank its author high amongst the modern bards of Caledonia. Without filling a whole page of 'The Reformer,' we cannot give our readers an adequate idea of the elegance and excellence of this poetic effusion; suffice it to say, that the sentiments which it contains, and the language in which they are breathed, are admirably calculated to inspire the poet, to arouse the patriot, to animate the Christian, and to delight the most indifferent reader."—*Ayrshire Reformer.*

"The work has already attained to a third edition, and is marked by much shrewdness, and a deep vein of satire—by imagination and fancy, to fashion new conceptions; and judgment to blend in harmony all the materials which have thus been accumulated—by no inconsiderable knowledge of nature, both moral and physical—and by touching pathos and sensibility."—*Kelso Chronicle, May*, 1841.

"The leading poem, 'Eglinton Park Meeting,' is distinguished for sound, manly, vigorous thought, abounding at the same time with rich and humorous description. Mr Ramsay is unquestionably a man of considerable genius—appears to have read and studied well the very best poetry, and is withal an acute and shrewd observer of

human nature. * * * * Mr Ramsay's poems, while they redound so much to his own credit, are honourable to the land of his birth—a land rendered classic by the works of the immortal Burns."—*Kelso Mail, May*, 1841.

"Mr Ramsay, in his various pieces, evinces many of the greatest attributes of a true poet, whether he treats of the grave or the gay, the humorous or the pathetic. His language is terse, forcible, and appropriate, and has the high merit of being poetical, without that straining at effect which so often accompanies mediocrity of talent."—*Galloway Register, October*, 1841.

"These are poems which few can read without the heart yielding its tribute of gratitude—a tear. We are not surprised that the works of John Ramsay should have reached a third edition. Our wonder is more directed to the circumstance of a man in a humble rank of life, and who received few advantages from education, being able to write with so much power of eloquence and beauty. The volume is full of genius, and the reader, whatever his taste may be, will find something to please."—*Caledonian Mercury, October*, 1840.

"We shall not assume to say what Ramsay might have been had fortune placed him in a different position in life to that which he has thus far adorned. The man, however, whose muse could, from the loom-shop of a Kilmarnock weaver, give to the world even one strain of the many which adorn this unpretending volume, may fairly claim to be worthy of, if already he has not achieved, immortality. Some few of the poems here are perhaps little worthy of him—some few which appear to be the productions of merely ephemeral thoughts, occurrences, and perhaps feelings. These, even, are often clever; whilst in many of the more sterling productions of his pen a poetic talent is displayed which is highly honourable to their author. The 'Eglinton Park Meeting,' and 'Dundonald Castle,' are forcibly written, and display occasional beauties of a very high order; whilst in 'Musings by the Clyde,' and a few of his occasional pieces, we can find little which will not do credit to a writer of much greater pretensions. On another occasion we shall endeavour to give an ex-

tract or two, as specimens of the style of our bard. At present we can only say to him, *strive* on towards

> ' The steep where Fame's proud temple shines afar ; '

and predict that he will not hold a mean place there in the eyes of his fellow-countrymen and the world."—*Liverpool Standard, December*, 1842.

" Eglinton Park Meeting, and other Poems, by John Ramsay, Kilmarnock. 1842.—This is a small volume of poems (chiefly in the Scottish Lowland dialect), containing many pleasing compositions of considerable merit. The general plaintive and somewhat sombre cast of the author's poetry, dwelling chiefly, when in a serious mood, upon the grandeurs and terrors of external nature, and the desolated pride of ancient halls, is nevertheless often highly and effectually relieved by striking instances of that dry sarcastic humour, and angular shrewdness of expression, which all who are in the least degree acquainted with Scottish character and Scottish literature, are prepared at once to expect as a qualification, and enjoy as a congeniality. The author is a man apparently of varied and extensive experience of life, who has had many troubles to contend with, and many trials of heart to submit to ; and such, the clouds which have overhung from time to time his worldly prospects, are faithfully and forcibly reflected in his verse, as well as those moments of light which outbalance whole years of gloom, and which with every man occasionally enliven the landscape of life."—*Liverpool Chronicle, October* 1842.

" No one can read the above without admiring the poetry, and being struck with the feeling and force of expression."—*Grant's London Journal.*

" Eglinton Park Meeting, and other Poems, by John Ramsay. Edinburgh: Stirling, Kenney, and Co.—John Ramsay, the author of this little volume of poems, is a carpet weaver by trade, and a native of the town of Kilmarnock, in Scotland, famous for

the manufacture of its carpets, bonnets, and nighteaps ; but far more famous for being what may be called the birth-place of the first edition of Burns's poems. It is thus, perhaps, one of the most interesting localities in Scotland. The associations arising from the circumstances just alluded to, and some others connecting the town with the history of the illustrious poet above named, might be supposed to operate rather disadvantageously than otherwise as regards Mr Ramsay's productions, and, assuredly, if they had possessed less merit than they do, it would have been so. There is, however, a freshness and originality in most of Mr Ramsay's poems that effectually protect them from any unfavourable influence to which association or comparison might give rise. We have read them with very great pleasure, having rarely met with a volume of miscellaneous poetry, in which we found so much variety and excellence combined, both in the humorous and pathetic. We refer to our poet's corner for a specimen of Mr Ramsay's style."—*Preston Chronicle, July* 1843.

" Mr Ramsay's poems have now reached a sixth edition, which, we understand, is nearly exhausted. When a work has been so extensively circulated, it is almost superfluous, on our parts, to give an opinion on it. We must, however, be allowed to say that there is much in the book to deserve the support which the author has received. A keen sense of the ridiculous, as well as strong powers of description, characterise the principal poem. The author has not travelled from Dan to Beersheba and found all barren. He has been an observer of men and things, and has profited by his experience. His ' Address to Dundonald Castle' has received much and deserved praise for its picturesque and pathetic beauty, many other of the smaller poems are possessed of great merit. We hope Mr Ramsay may go on and prosper."—*Odd-Fellows' Magazine, October* 1843.

" This unpretending little volume, emanating from a person moving in humble life, but endowed with a gifted mind, presents an agreeable melange of verse—sentimental, romantic, and epigrammatic. The leading poem of the volume, which gives its title to the

work, is a lively portraiture of the moving incidents at the races annually held at that arena of revived chivalry, Eglinton Park—it is full of bustle and animation, and genuine character, and exhibits a happy power of blending humour with satire in description. The poem flows on harmoniously, and possesses a continuous interest, which carries the reader pleasantly to its close. The minor poems are distinguished by much grace and beauty, and give evidence of the author's intimate acquaintance with the romantic and stirring events of which Scotland has so frequently been the scene."—*Bradshaw's Journal*, *March* 1843.

"The longest poem in the present collection is entitled 'Eglinton Park Meeting:' it is a humorous description of a race-meeting in the country, with a dash of satire mingled here and there, with bright and truthful touches of descriptive.

* * * * * * * *

Of the smaller poems, mostly written on occasional subjects, and many concerning local facts and persons, the greater part are good, and a few exceedingly happy."—*Birmingham Journal*, *March* 1843.

"These poems are the evident production of a poetic genius of no mean order. The volume is replete with many pieces evincing much feeling, force of expression, and pathetic eloquence. We have read the volume with no ordinary pleasure. The author is a carpet weaver by trade, but has read much of men and books with no unobservant eye. He is a native of Kilmarnock, which circumstance forcibly reminds us that the same locality is famous as being the 'land of Burns,' and where, too, the first edition of his immortal works was published; and although we do not mean to insinuate that Mr Ramsay is a Burns, we have no hesitation in saying that there is poetry in this volume, which, without any discredit to the 'greater light,' deserves a niche in the Parnassian temple in which the great national bard is, by common consent, enshrined. There is here much sombre humour and delicate pathos, occasional flashings of poetry of the highest order, and much to the evidence that the author of this volume is a true poet."—*Mona's Herald*, *May*, 1844.

"An elegant little volume of poems has just been put into our hand by the author, Mr John Ramsay, weaver, of Kilmarnock. Did not the page of history afford so many instances of genius triumphing over every obstacle, and winging its 'onward and upward' flight, unaided by learning, or unsupported by favourable circumstances, we should have expressed surprise that many of the gems which this unpretending volume contains could owe their origin to a mind sequestered from the poet's home, the green field, the mountains' craggy steep, or the margin of the lake, dim gleaming in the purple dawn, and immured amidst the noise and confusion of a weaving-shop. John Ramsay is another proof that nature does not place the stamp of her nobility upon the wealthy and highly born, to the exclusion of the lowly tenant of the shade. Many of the pieces are of surpassing beauty, and breathe the genuine spirit of poesy—an originality of idea and expression is to be found pervading the whole volume, entering equally, although differently qualified, into the effusion of pathos and feeling, and the tale of pleasantry and satire. It is evident that Mr Ramsay, while warring with the toils, troubles, and disappointments which a cold unfeeling world knows so well how to inflict, has not been an idle observer of men and things. In some of his pieces traits of strange character are exhibited, and in others an intimate acquaintance with the history of the lowland portion of his native land is strikingly shown—that land which the genius of Burns has made classic, and where many a scene of blood and tumult has been furnished for the pen of the historian."—*Manx Liberal, April*, 1844.

"This is a small volume of beautiful poetry by a comparatively obscure individual. The author appears to have been educated in humble life, without any of the advantages which brighten the perceptions and call forth the energies of the mind. He has, however, a strong poetic genius—a genius which has risen superior to all the disadvantages of birth, station, and education, of which the volume before us is unequivocal evidence. Several editions of these poems have been before the public, and have received from the press unqualified encomiums; and for this reason—they are natural, vigorous, truthful, and full of poetic fire; very unlike many of the trashy

effusions which teem from the press at the present day. The principal poem, 'Eglinton Park Meeting,' is distinguished by sound and vigorous thought, and the descriptions are rich and humorous. 'Dundonald Castle,' too, is rich in poetic imagery and melting pathos. The Scottish pieces remind us occasionally of Burns, and some of the minor poems—the fragments are full to overflowing of genuine poetic feeling."—*Manx Sun, April*, 1844.

"Mr Ramsay is a true poet: he possesses great breadth of understanding; and his descriptive powers, both for portraying the beauties of external nature and the varieties of human emotion, are vivid and original."—*Hampshire Guardian, December*, 1846.

"These 'Notes' are evidently the production of a man who writes what he feels. The themes selected are sufficiently varied to elicit his thoughts on most subjects, and though he occasionally evinces a melancholy and depressed tone, the result, more or less, of misfortune, his verses are at once mellifluous and beautiful."—*Tyne Mercury, January*, 1846.

"Though we have only been able to glance at this elegant little volume, we have seen enough to assure us of the author's genius. It abounds with genuine poetry of feeling, expressed, in many instances, in really powerful language, and exhibits a descriptive talent of no common order. The pathetic and the gay, the beautiful and the humorous, are both here; and for the delight of the sons of the sacred land of Burns and Nicoll there are pieces clothed in that peculiar garb, the beauty and force of which few, save Scotchmen, can appreciate. Perhaps the best mode in which we can express our sense of the merits of the work is to say that John Ramsay is a poet, and not a mere manufacturer of verses. He pours forth the emotions and thoughts arising in the depths of his own soul, with the artistic skill essential to their influence over the feelings of others. We cannot think for one moment that he will long be suffered to remain in the shade of obscurity, and look forward to the time when his name will be honourably associated with the bards of his native land."—*Nottingham Review, May*, 1846.

"We sincerely wish that our columns could afford us space for a more ample review of this interesting work. It consists of a very pleasing assemblage of Scotch and English poems of considerable merit, in a handsome volume. The author, who stands well in literary fame as a Scotch bard, deserves the rare praise, like Burns, Prince, and others, of having raised himself from the lowly walks of common life to the high, but badly paid position of a mover of the public mind."—*Plymouth Herald, January*, 1847.

"This little volume, which has been placed in our hands under circumstances calculated to stay the uplifted arm of trenchant criticism, is the production of a noble-hearted Scottish weaver, who early drank inspiration at the fount which nourished the national genius of Robert Burns. Though only desirous of being enrolled among the minor bards of Scotland, John Ramsay is a glorious creature in his way, and his poetical productions would do honour to any country. The pervading sentiment of his poems is a quaint mixture of pathos and humour, totally free from everything approaching to grossness or vulgarity."—*Hull Advertiser, April*, 1846.

"In taking farewell of this pleasing little volume, we would earnestly recommend it to the notice of our readers, assured that in it they will find much to gratify and surprise them, while its blemishes are only such as increasing experience and maturing views may greatly ameliorate, or entirely remove."—*The Living Bards of Scotland—Clackmannanshire Advertiser, October*, 1845.

"Most of the poems have appeared before, but they have undergone such extensive and judicious revision in the present edition as cannot fail to make them be read with increasing interest. They are generally of a very varied character, and evidently written under widely different aspects and circumstances. Here we have the gay and the satirical, and there the humorous and the pathetic, which would seem to indicate that in the case of Mr Ramsay the promptings of the muse are somewhat capricious. Be this as it may, we always discover much freshness and vigour about his productions; and although his verse may lack the polish of education, it is not

deficient in the native energy and sweetness of poetical genius."—*Scotsman, Edinburgh, August*, 1845.

"'Eglinton Park Meeting,' the opening poem of the volume is a humorous description of a race-meeting, and is replete with animation, highly descriptive, blending truth with satire in a lively manner. It is followed by 'Dundonald Castle,' in which genius is more brilliant and dazzling in her flight, * * * * * * The minor poems are capital in their way, and the volume is issued in a neat form. We wish the gifted author every success."—*Armagh Guardian*, 1847.

"We like this volume much: it is evidently the work of a man of poetical talent. There are many fine lines, and some spirited versification. It is evident that Mr Ramsay, although a Kilmarnock weaver, is possessed of many of the attributes of a genuine poet. We make the following selections, and recommend the volume to our readers, being satisfied that they will find much to be admired."—*Ulster General Advertiser*, 1847.

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